

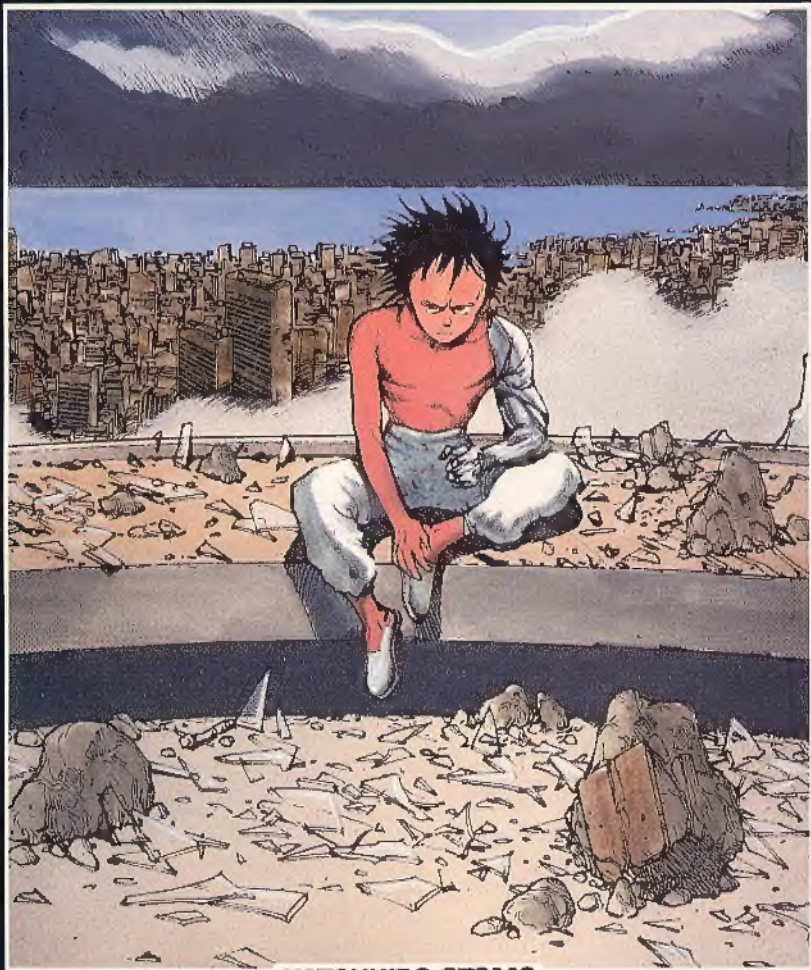
AKIRA

23

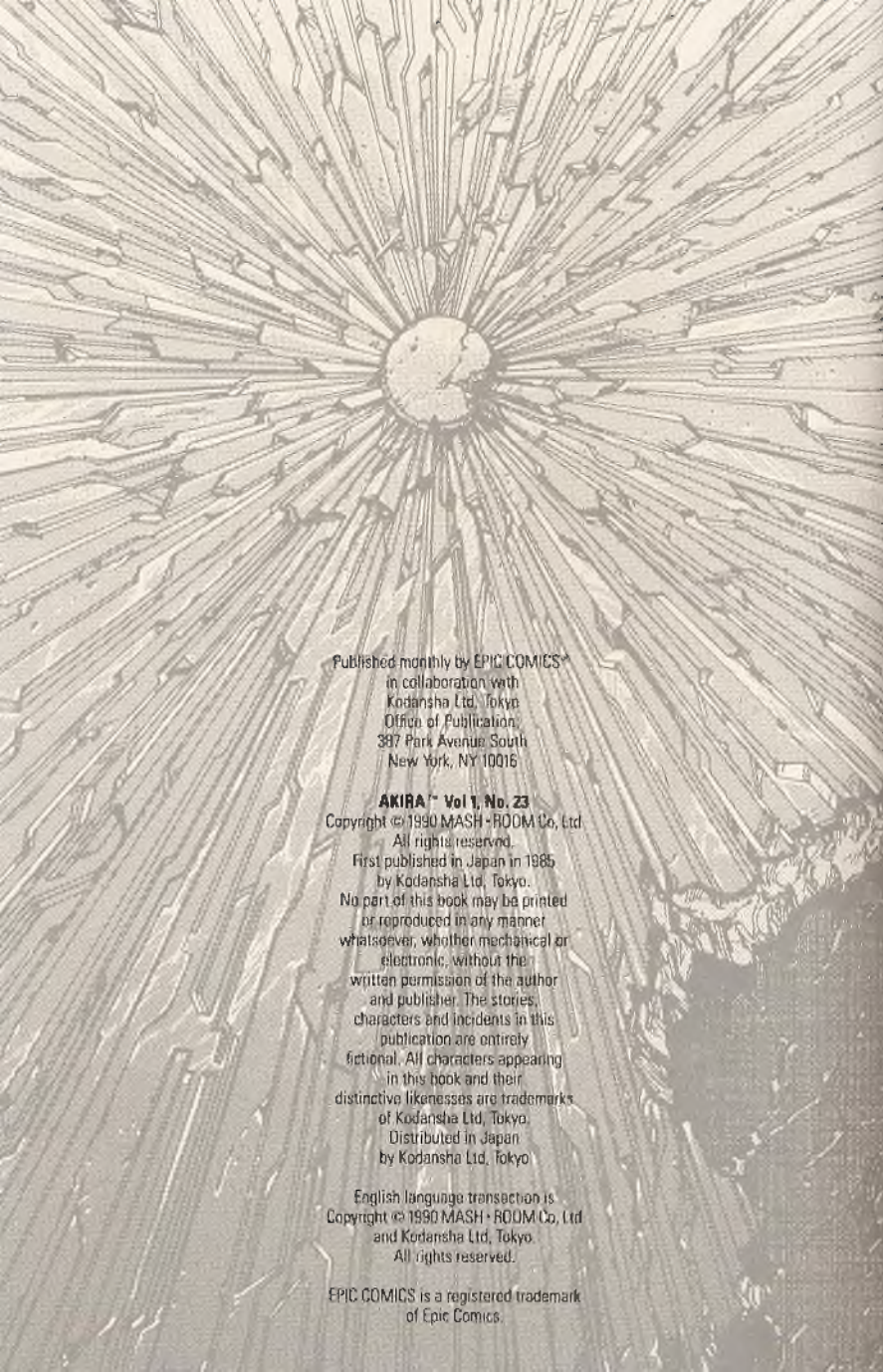
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KATSUHIRO OTOMO



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AKIRA

BY KATSUHIRO OTOMO

Chapter 23

AKIRA'S RAIN

WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE

Twenty-three. The world hovers on the brink of World War IV. In a section of **Neo-Tokyo** known as the "old city"—where, thirty-eight years before, the destruction of World War III began—a band of teenaged delinquents led by **Kaneda** encounter **Number 26**—a child named **Takashi** who uses extraordinary telekinetic abilities to injure **Tetsuo**, one of Kaneda's close friends.

As a result Kaneda and Tetsuo become entangled in a power struggle between a mysterious military and scientific organization led by the Colonel and an underground resistance group bent on putting a stop to the Colonel's activities. Members of the resistance include Kay, Ryu, and a formidable woman named Chiyoko. Among their superiors is the blind Lady Miyako—a powerful religious leader with strong precognitive gifts.

The Colonel has a number of psychic children under his control. Each child is identified by a number marked on the hand. Lady Miyako was, at one time, Number 19. Number 28 is Akira, so powerful that since the war he has been suspended in cryogenic sleep.

The Colonel's staff conducts experiments which awaken tremendous telepathic potential in Tetsuo, who is redubbed Number 41. Tetsuo is able to shrug off the most serious injuries. He goes on a killing spree, even attacking Kaneda. Followed by Kay and Kaneda, Tetsuo seeks out Akira, whose powers he fears may rival his own. In hibernation, Akira's power responds to Tetsuo's psychic energy. When Tetsuo reaches Akira's resting place, the cryogenic chamber cracks from within. **Akira** emerges, dazed and docile following his long sleep.

The **Colonel** summons the powerful SDF military satellite and orders that its laser cannon be fired at **Tetsuo** and **Akira**. The two are separated by the blasts. **Akira** is saved by **Kay** and **Kaneda**, but the laser strikes Tetsuo's left arm. Afterward, **Neo-Tokyo** is placed in a state of military emergency, with "caretaker robots" patrolling the street and keeping order.



Chiyoko



Akira



Seer



Tetsuo's Aide



Akira and the resistance fighters are cornered by the Colonel's troops, but all seems well when **Takashi** fondly greets **Akira**. Then **Nezu**, a former resistance leader who has betrayed his own side, arrives. He tries to kill **Akira**, but kills **Takashi** instead.

The trauma of **Takashi's** death galvanizes **Akira**. He fully awakens and unleashes a coherent light blast powerful enough to devastate the entire city. **Masaru** and **Kiyoko** sweep most of the people in the area upward. **Kaneda** is last seen vanishing toward the sky. Afterward, **Lady Miyako** opens her temple and offers shelter and comfort to those in need, gathering large groups of followers in the East.

Neo-Tokyo is completely cut off from the outside. In the western part of the city the **Great Tokyo Empire** is formed—a

monarchy with **Akira** on the throne and **Tetsuo** as his prime minister. Together the pair use their powers, healing the sick, wielding control of the faithful, and organizing their subjects into fighting units that destroy caretaker robots and conquer military and medical relief parties sent from the outside world. In addition, **Tetsuo** conducts deadly tests on special followers, finding more psychics fit for training. The Empire is eventually infiltrated by teams of spies from the outside world.

The **Colonel** is alone, living in hiding. The remnants of his forces have joined the survivors of the resistance. **Masaru** and **Kiyoko** are sick with withdrawal from the drug which augments and channels mental powers, and when **Kiyoko**, whose powers are precognitive, tells **Kay** to find **Number 19**, **Lady Miyako** asks that **Kay** bring the



Ryu



Lady Miyako



Tetsuo



Kaori

other psychics to her when they are well.

Tetsuo's new psychics kill most of the spies from the outside, but their leader, **Lt. Yamada**, escapes when **Ryu** leads him into the safety of an underground shelter. **Yamada** refuses to tell **Ryu** who has sent him or to let **Ryu** join him. He does, however, reveal that Russia has conquered part of Japan, and that the Americans' fear of **Akira** makes them reluctant to get involved.

Tetsuo forces an orgy of sex and drugs on several young girls, only one of whom—**Kaori**—survives. During it, **Tetsuo** sees visions of the past, the present and of possible futures. Afterwards, **Tetsuo** looks into **Akira's** mind. He emerges a terrified wreck. When he recovers, he decides that **Lady Miyako**—whose mind he also briefly touched—may be able to explain matters to him. Taking a dose of power-enhancing medication, **Tetsuo** teleports to the temple of the religious leader. **Lady Miyako** recounts to him the experiments decades earlier which created the numbered psychics and reveals that the Third World War was begun by a mental blast from **Akira**. She also warns **Tetsuo** that he alone can control **Akira's** near-

inconceivable powers, but that he must first overcome his dependency on drugs. Disgusted and perplexed, **Tetsuo** departs. On returning to his stronghold, he neglects his duties of state, concentrating instead on trying to kick the habit.

Kay and **Chiyoko** try to move **Masaru** and **Kiyoko** to Lady Miyako's temple, but are attacked by Tetsuo's followers, who escape with **Kiyoko**. **Chiyoko** rescues the girl, but is badly wounded. The two are brought to safety by the **Colonel**, who has been living in isolation while the last of his scientists attempts to re-establish contact with SOL. **Chiyoko**, delirious, tells the **Colonel** to take **Kiyoko** to the temple, where he'll also find **Masaru**. Meanwhile, **Kay** safely conveys **Masaru** to the temple. There, **Miyako** mysteriously alludes to **Kaneda** and informs **Kay** that although **Kay** herself lacks intrinsic psychic gifts, she serves as a powerful medium for the talents of others.

Ryu and **Lt. Yamada** watch the Empire from hiding. When Tetsuo's dapper lieutenant—disgusted by Tetsuo's lack of interest in the way **Lady Miyako** has thwarted their schemes—leads most of the Empire's men out as an army,



The Colonel



Masaru



Kay



Lt. Yamada



Ryu and **Yamada** move in. They are startled by an encounter with **Tetsuo**, whose withdrawal causes his power to surge erratically. **Ryu** is even more startled when **Tetsuo** blurts out what his telepathy has shown him—that the foreign spy has come to assassinate **Akira**.

Tetsuo's lieutenant leads his army to Lady Miyako's temple, and they slaughter all in their path—monks, penitents and helpless refugees alike. They are, however, thwarted by the power of Lady Miyako's psychically gifted monks and defeated when **Kay** captures their leader. **Lady Miyako** refuses to permit the execution of her enemies. Tetsuo's men depart alive, bitterly swearing revenge. They return an hour later hungry for blood and victory. **Kay**, along with **Kai**—one of the surviving members of Kaneda's old gang—

urges **Lady Miyako** to flee before it's too late. When the religious leader refuses, they decide to make a last stand with **Masaru** in the temple's tower—but before they can get the boy to safety, the attack begins.



Kaneda



Kiyoko



Kai



Rhymester



SHOOM



BWHOOM



HEY, THERE, DARLIN', DON'T YOU BE DYIN' TOO SOON.



STICK AROUND AND ENJOY THE SHOW.



MONSTER!



FLIP







BULLSHIT!



DON'T YOU
SCOFF AT
ME, OLD
FART!

IT'S A
SERIOUS
THREAT,
PHRASED AS
SERIOUS ART!



HUNK?



YOU MAY FIRE AT
WILL! GO ON NOW,
START...

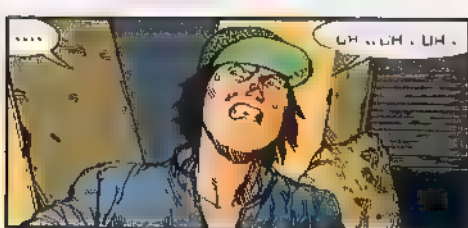


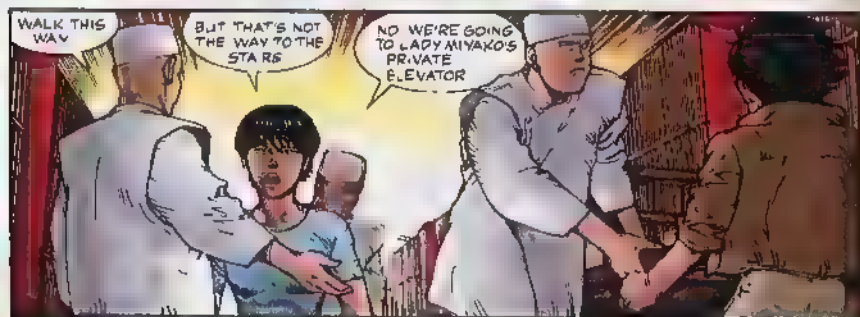
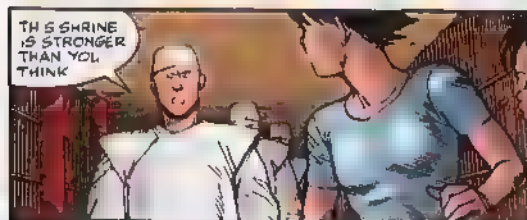
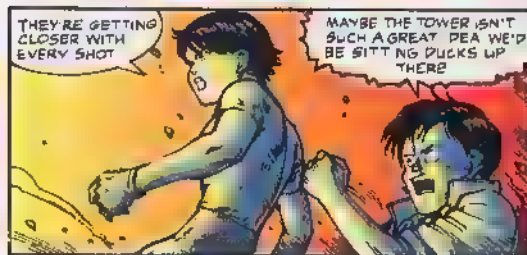
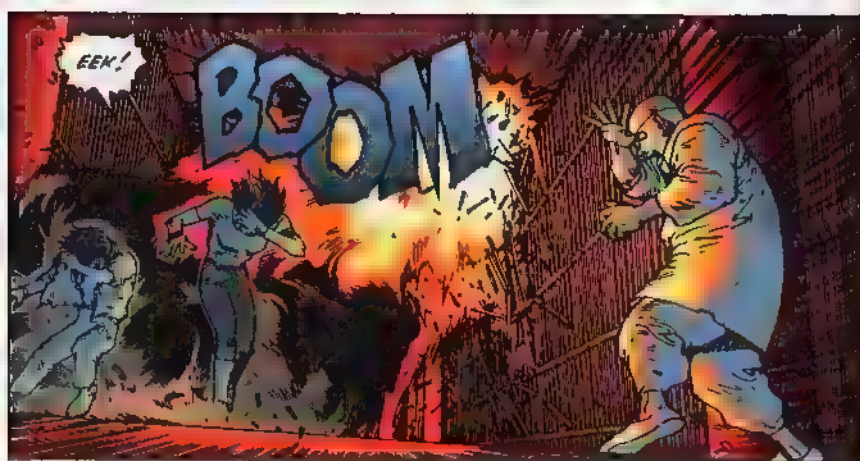
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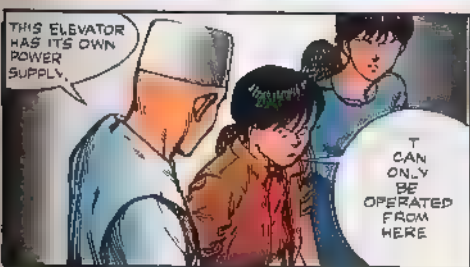
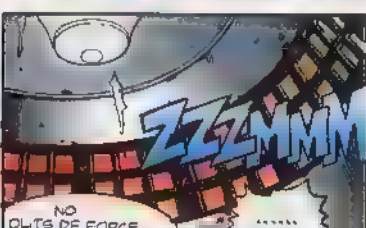
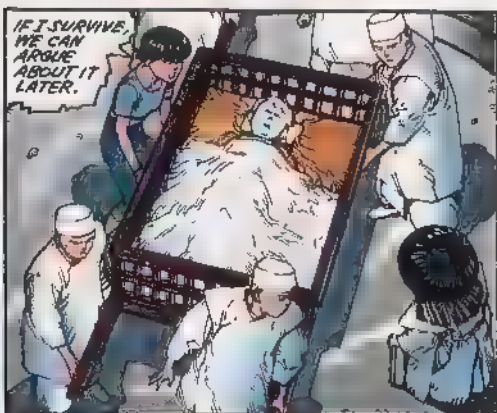
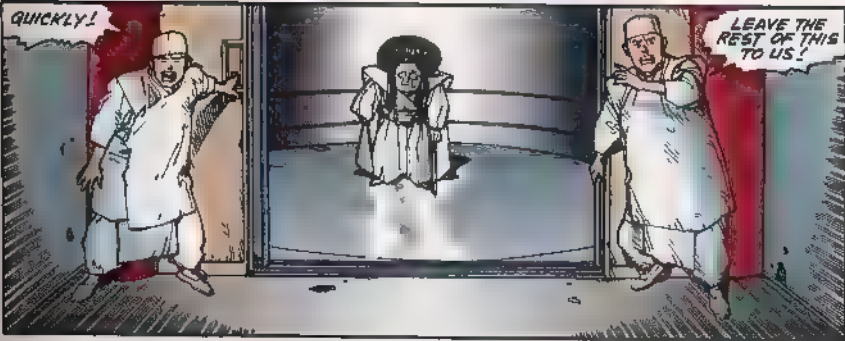
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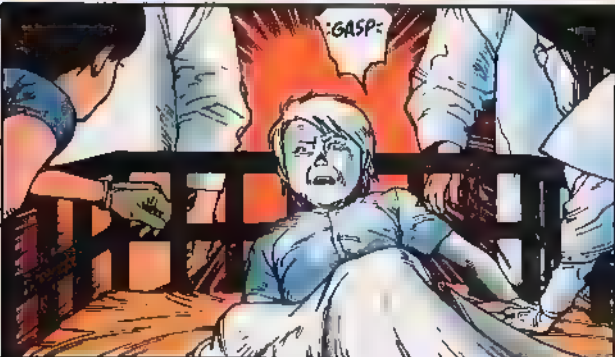
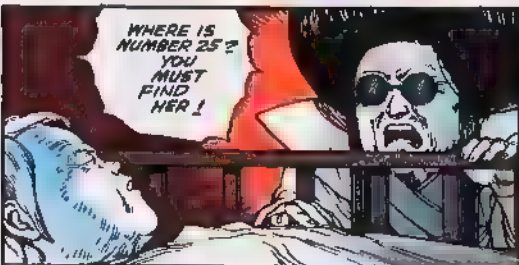
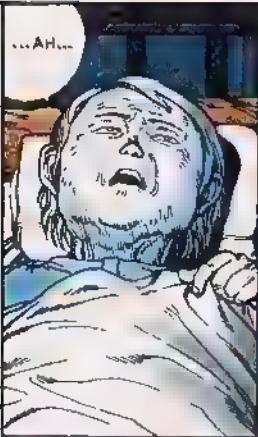


COLONEL!!











MA...
SA...
RU...

WELL?
WHY
DON'T
YOU
SHOOT?

.....

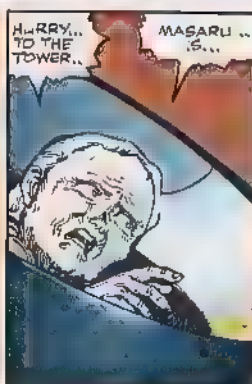
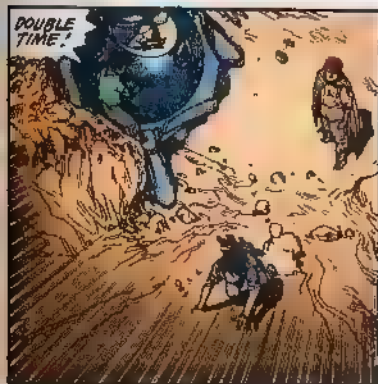
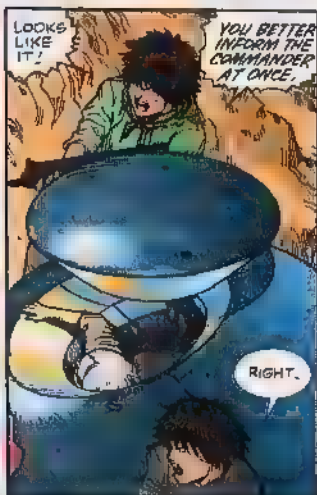
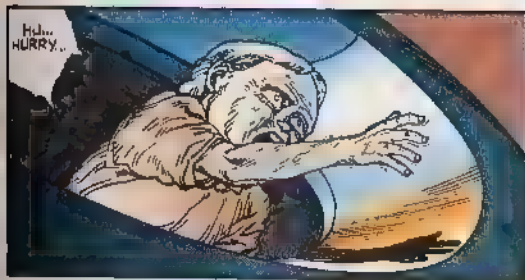
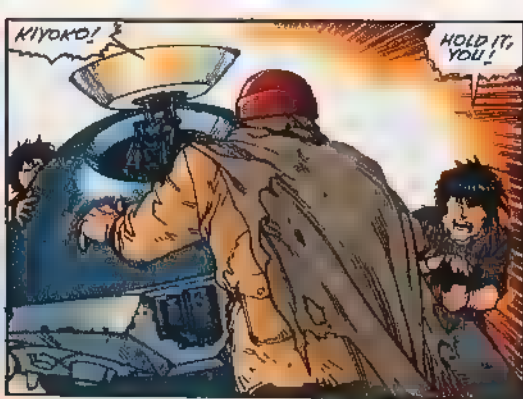
DON'T MAKE A
SUPERIOR OFFICER
LOSE PATIENCE
W TH YOU !

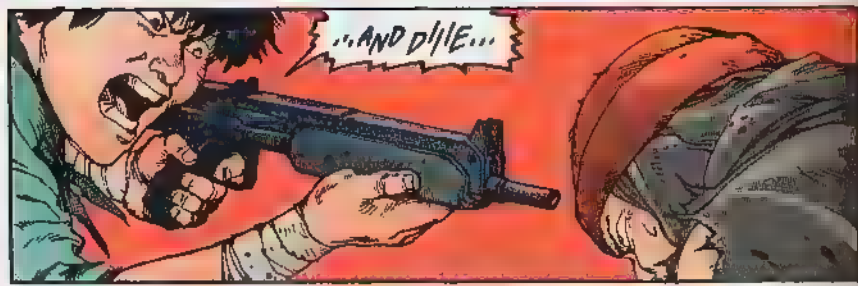
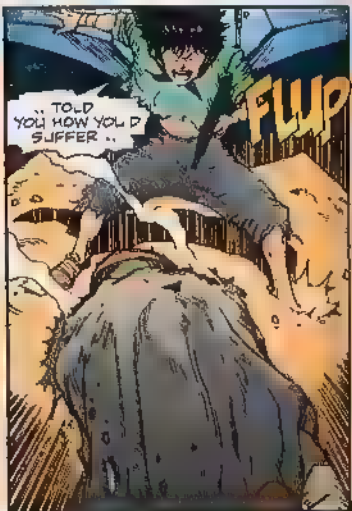
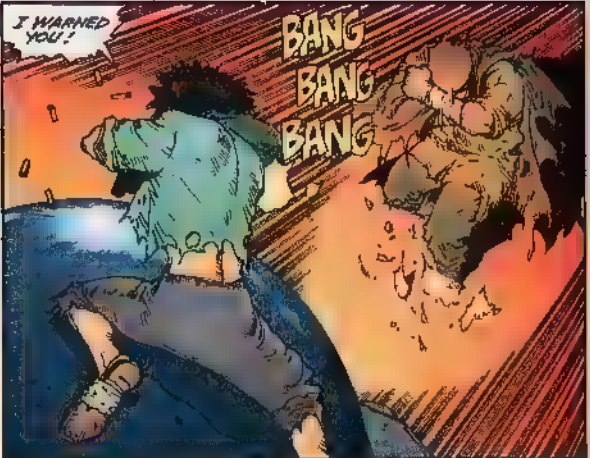
KLAT

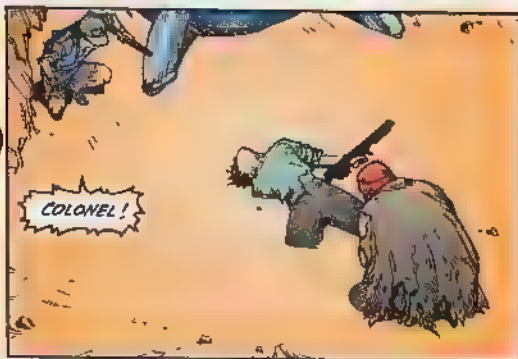
IT MOVED!

YAGHI!

EH?







ARE YOU SURE
IT'S THE SAME
LITTLE GIRL?



A STRANGER
HAD HER
HIDDEN
IN ONE
OF THOSE
CARE-
TAKER
ROBOTS.



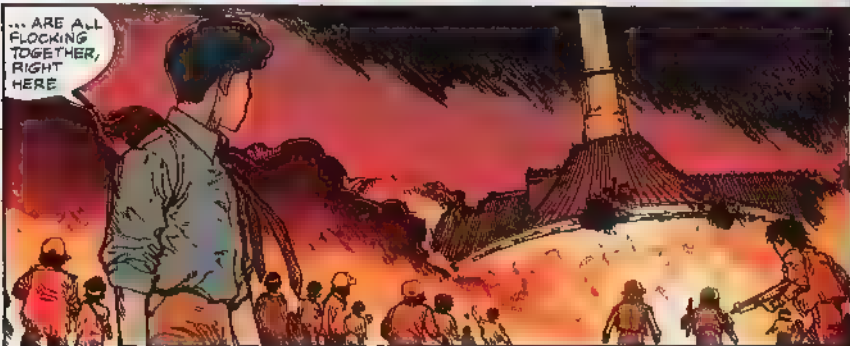
SHE LOOKS
JUST
LIKE
THE
KID
WE'VE BEEN
SEARCHING
FOR.

HAH!



B RDS
OF A
FEATHER..

... ARE ALL
FLOCKING
TOGETHER,
RIGHT
HERE



THERE ARE TWO
MEN GLARING
THE STRANGER,
BUT HE LOOKS
PRETTY
TOUGH.



TAKE FIVE
OR SIX MORE
WITH YOU



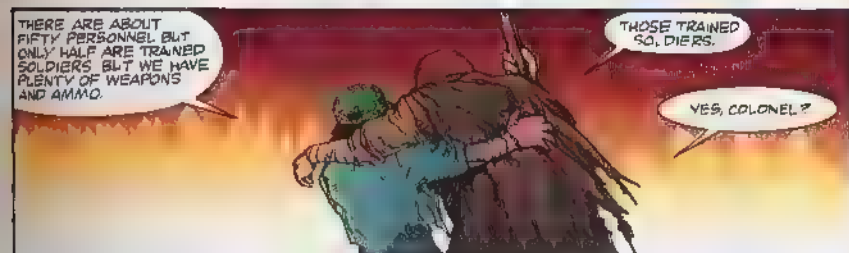
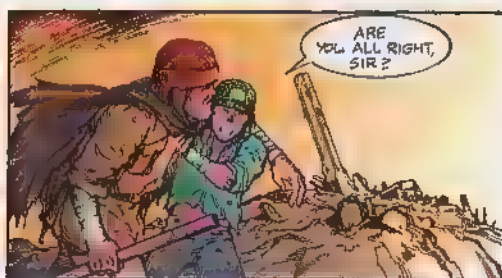
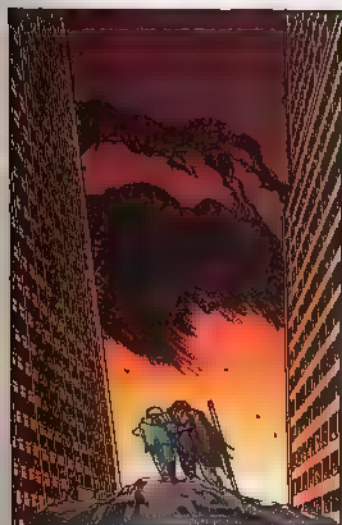
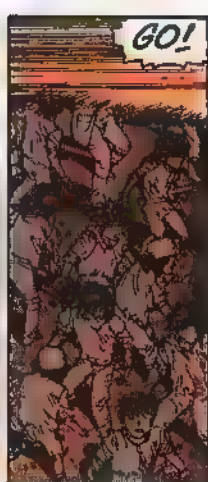
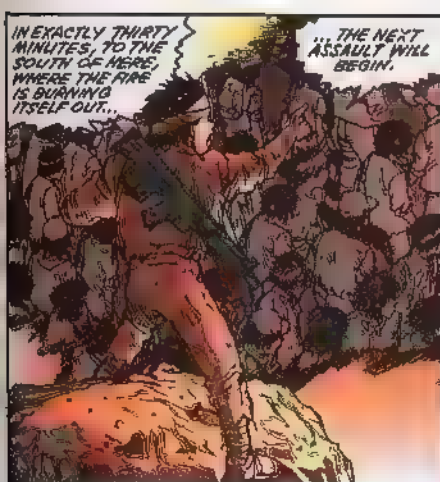
IF HE GIVES YOU
ANY TROUBLE,
HE'S LUNCH
MEAT, BUT DON'T
TOUCH THE
GIRL.

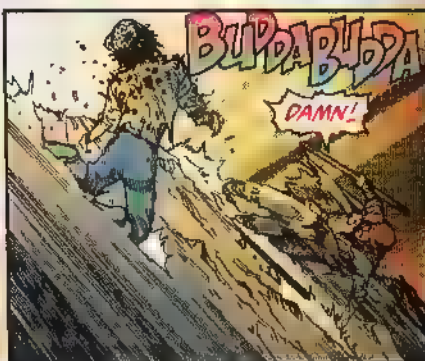
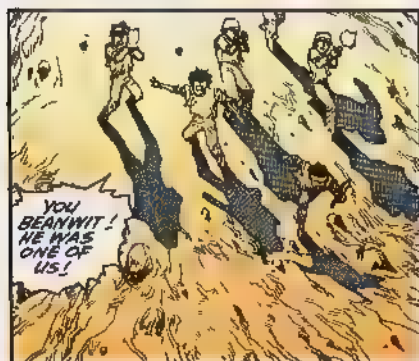
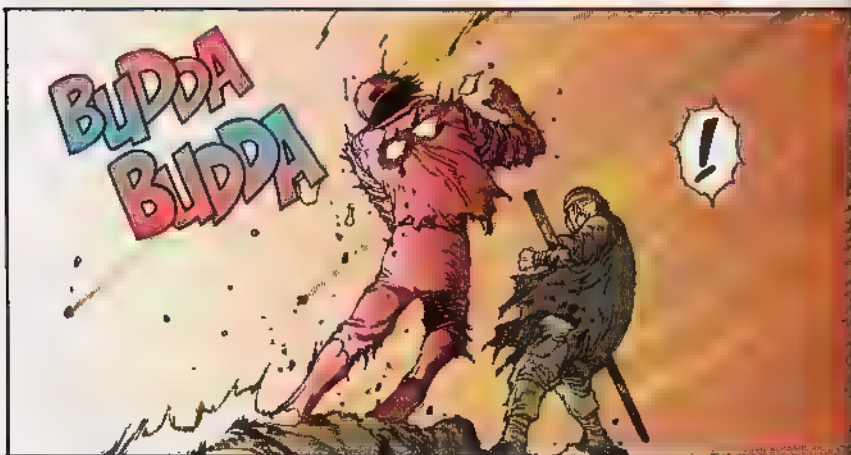
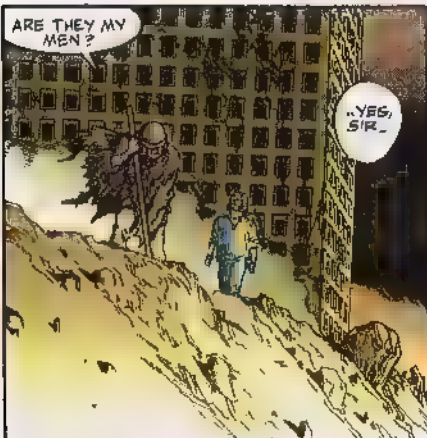
I DON'T
WANT A SCRATCH
ON HER.

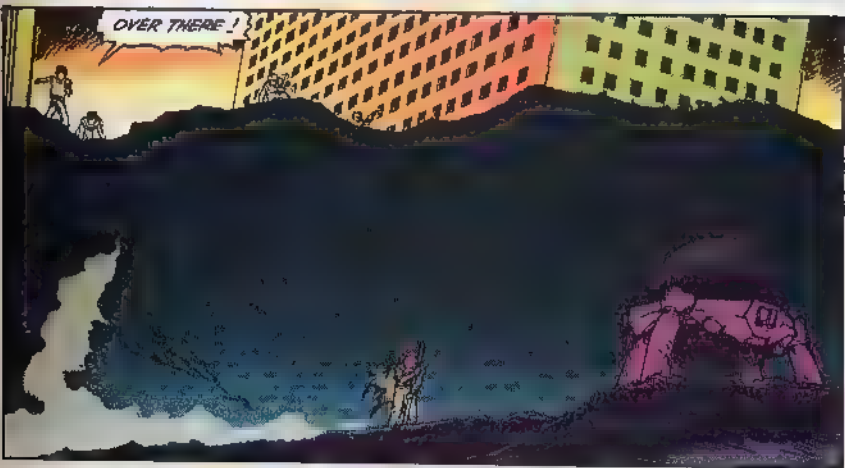
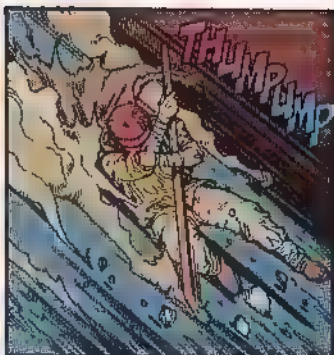
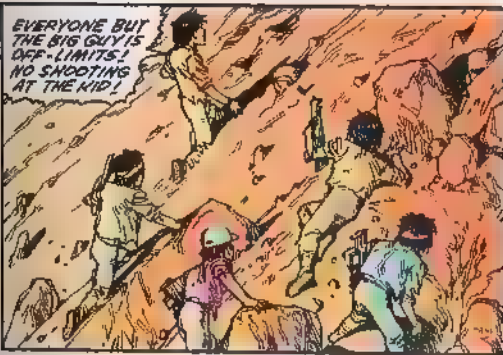


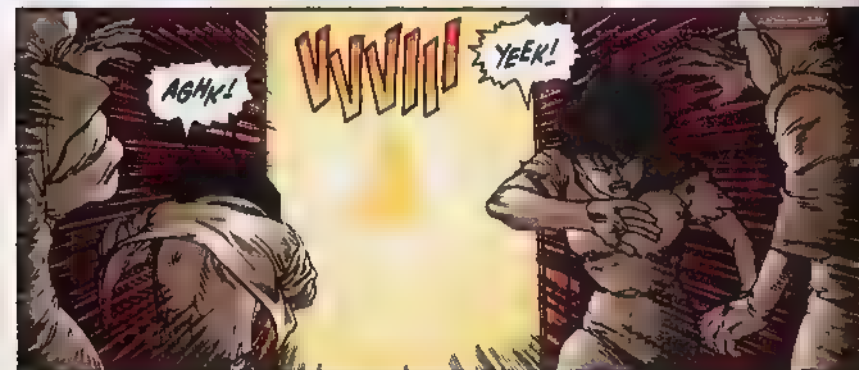
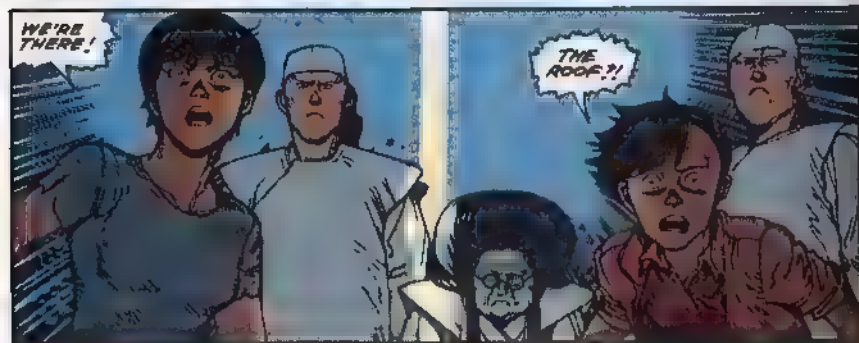
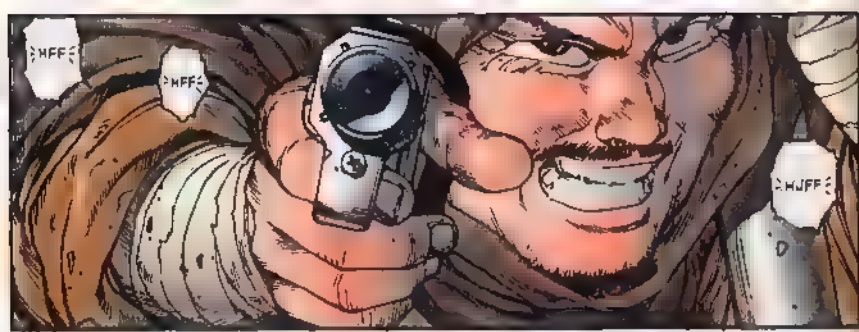
EVERYBODY
LISTEN -

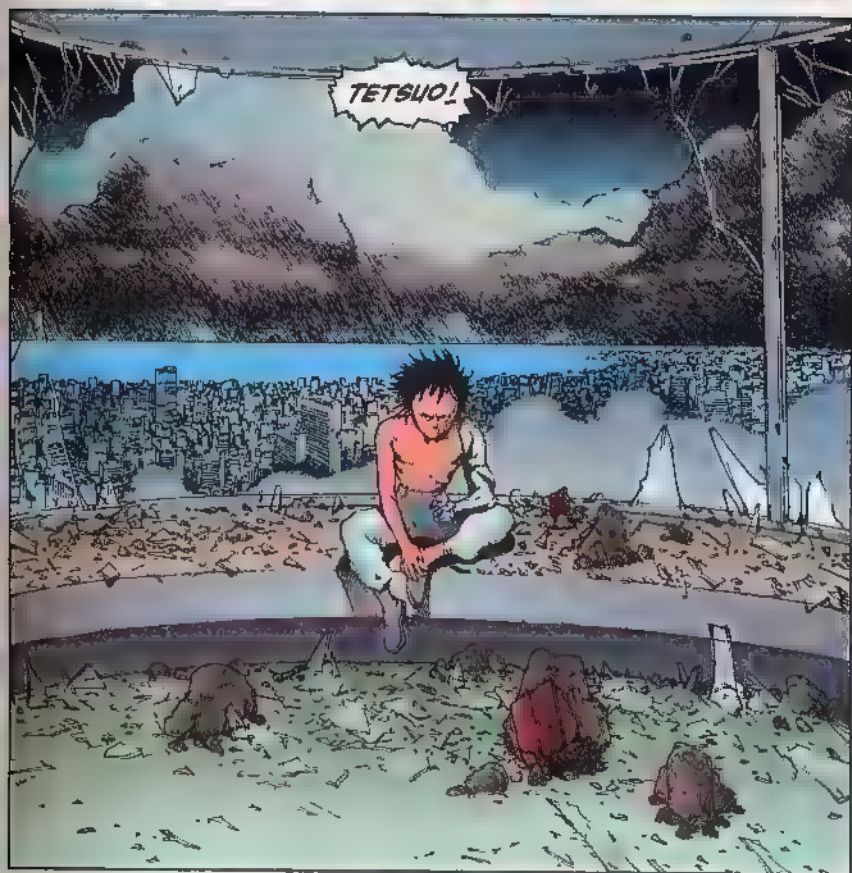
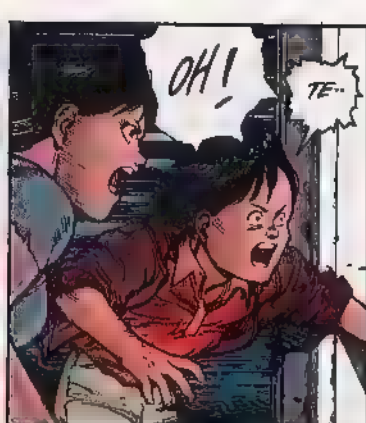
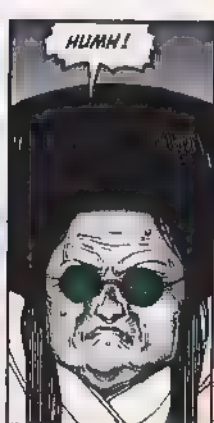
LISTEN UP!

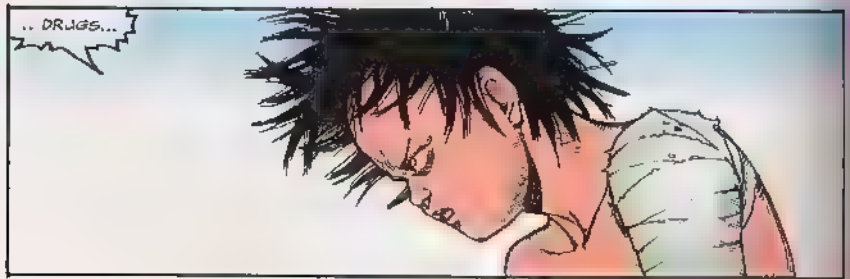
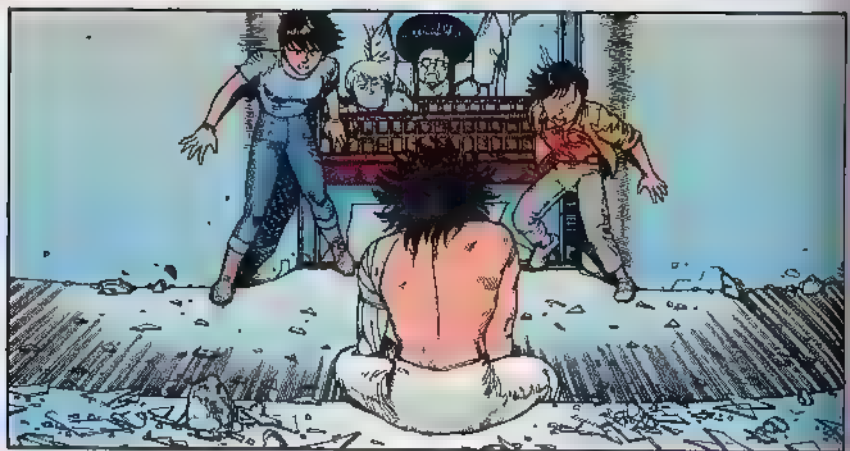
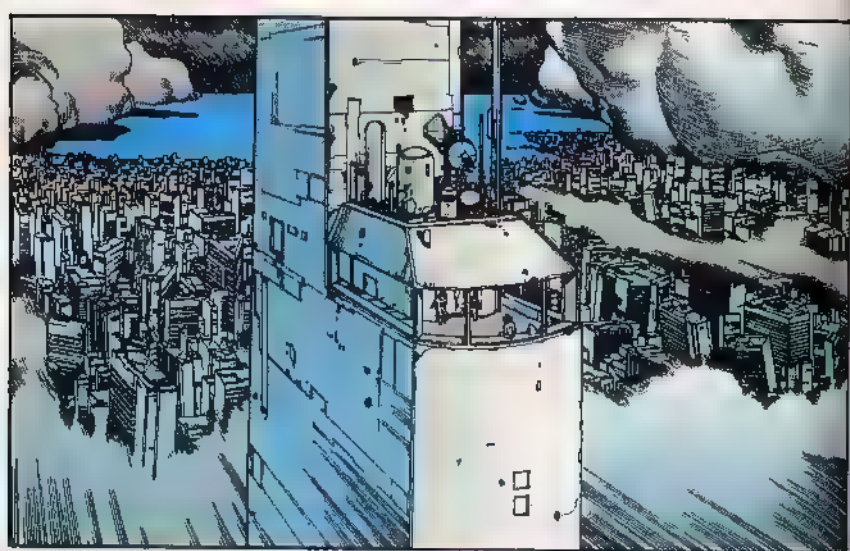












AT A TIME LIKE THIS?
YOU'RE A DISGRACE,
NUMBER 42

...OI, ME...
...SOME
DRUGS...

ACCEPT
THE PAIN
AND FACE
YOUR DESTINY!

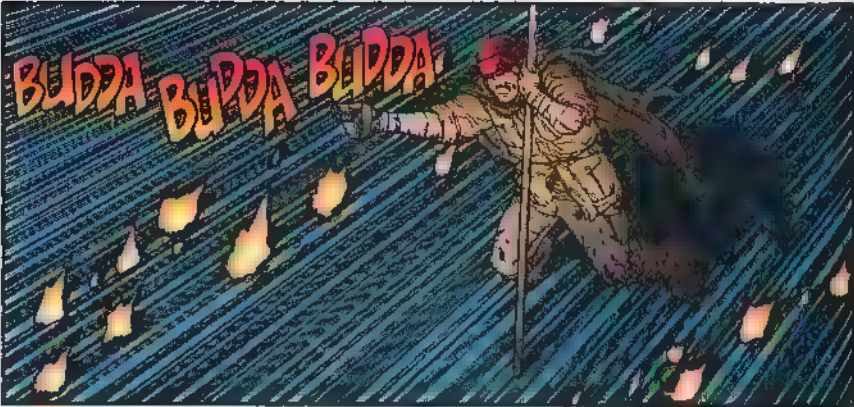
HOLD IT,
TETSUO...!

WAIT!

CAN'T YOU
SEE THERE'S
SOMETHING
WRONG WITH
HIM?

... DR...

DRUGS...
GOT TO..

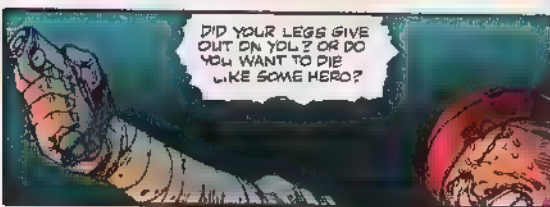


WHAT'S YOUR
PROBLEM?
RUN.



FINE! HAVE
IT YOUR OWN
WAY!

2!



DID YOUR LEGS GIVE
OUT ON YOU? OR DO
YOU WANT TO DIE
LIKE SOME HERO?



WHAT THE
HELL'S
THAT 2!

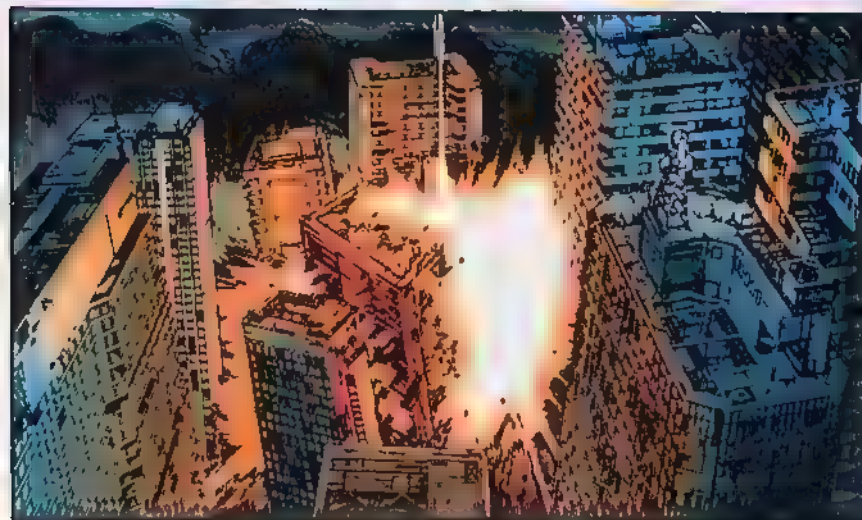
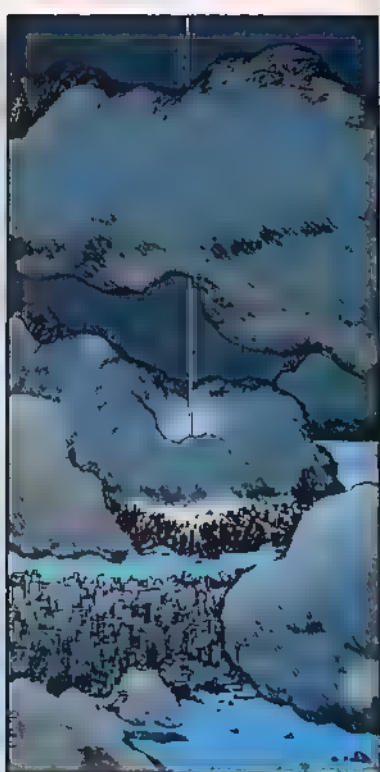
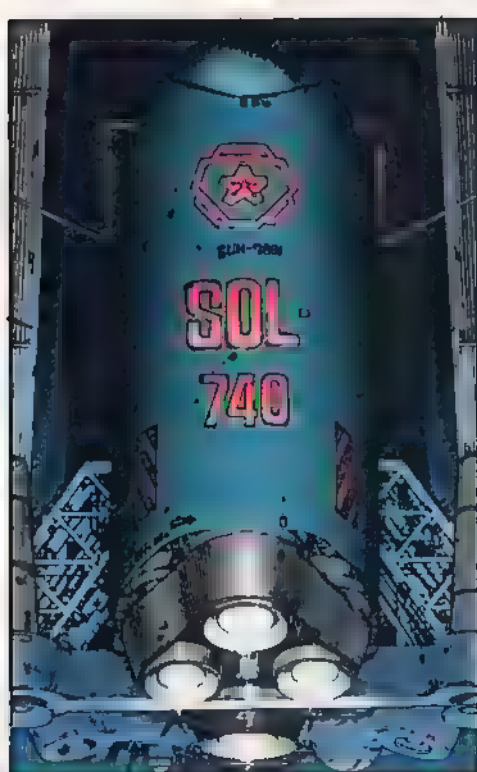
A LASER?

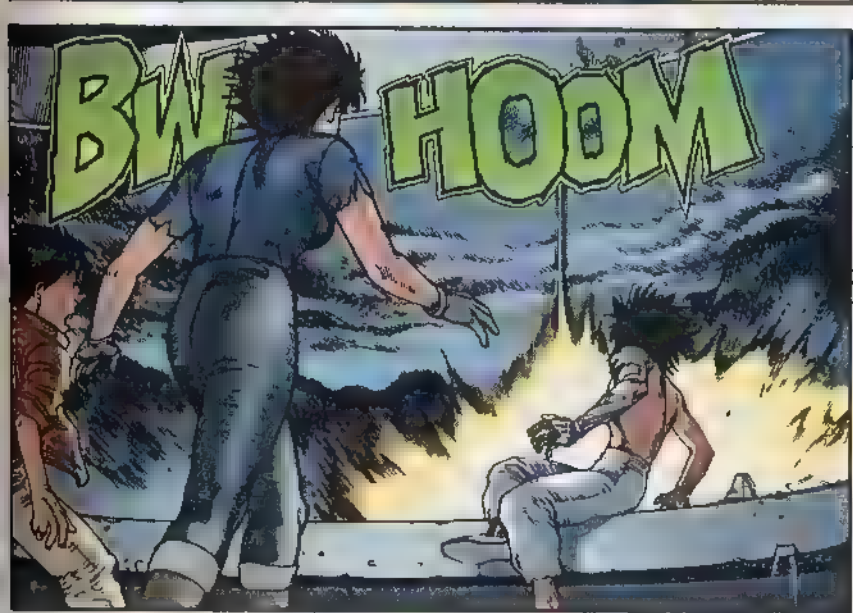
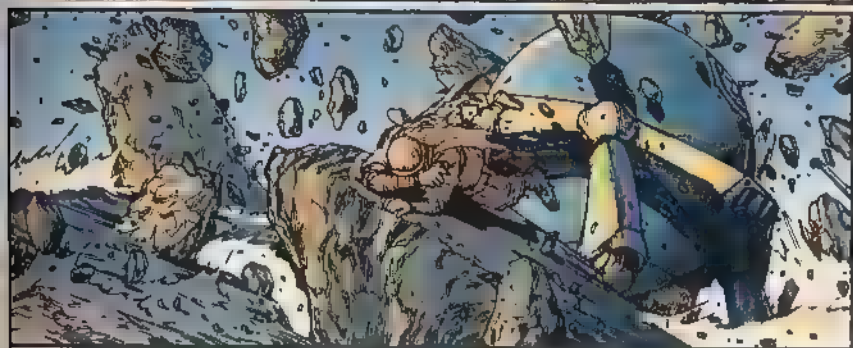
GG...GRR...RRR!!

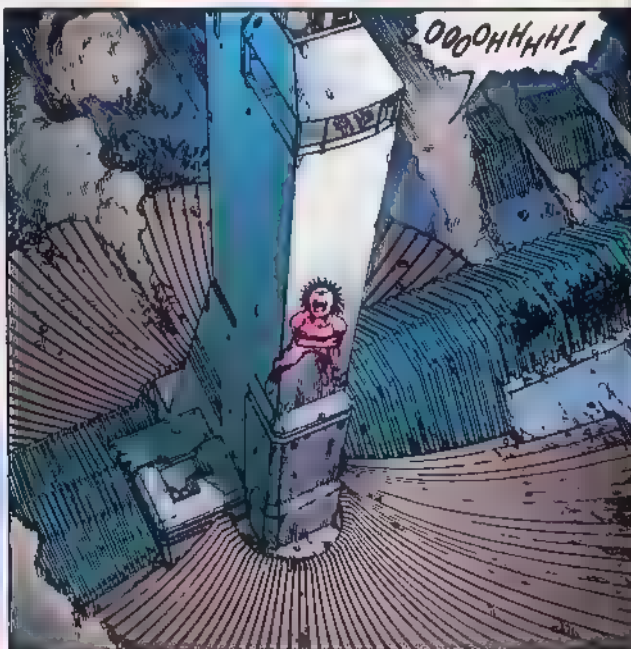
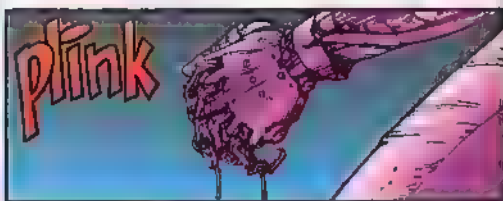
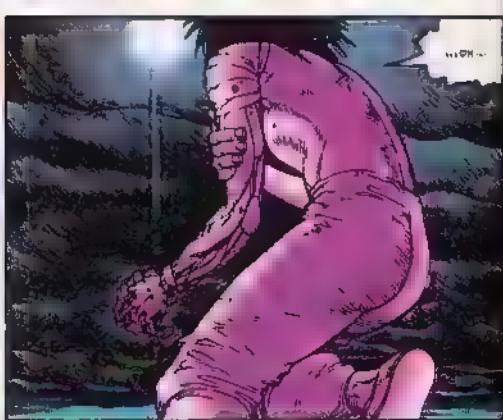
KILL HIM!

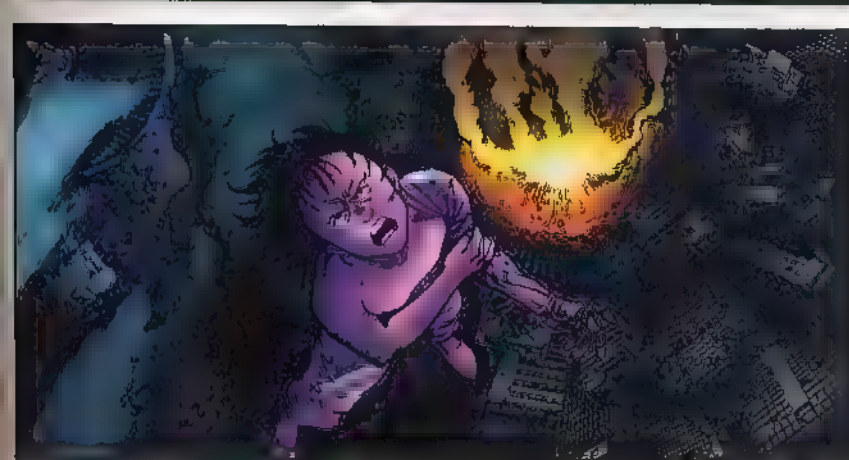
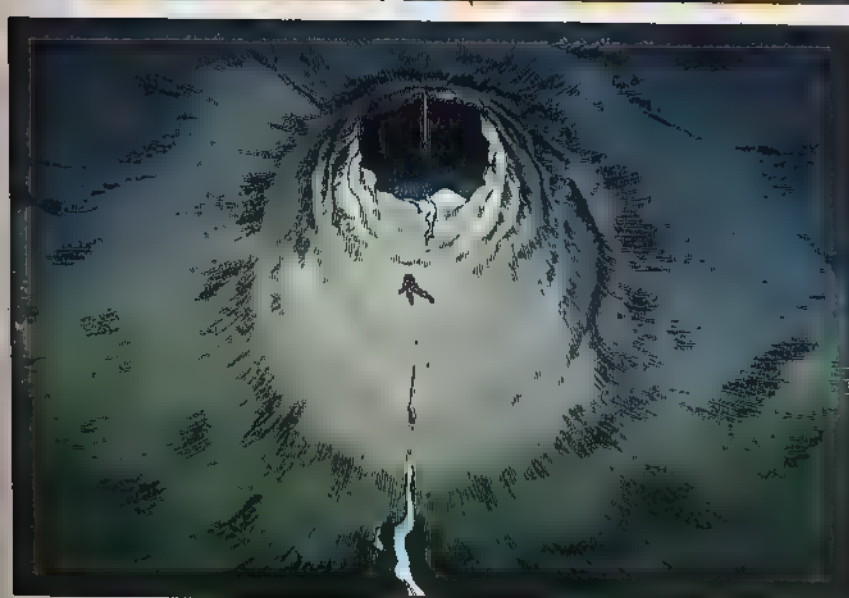
NOW!!

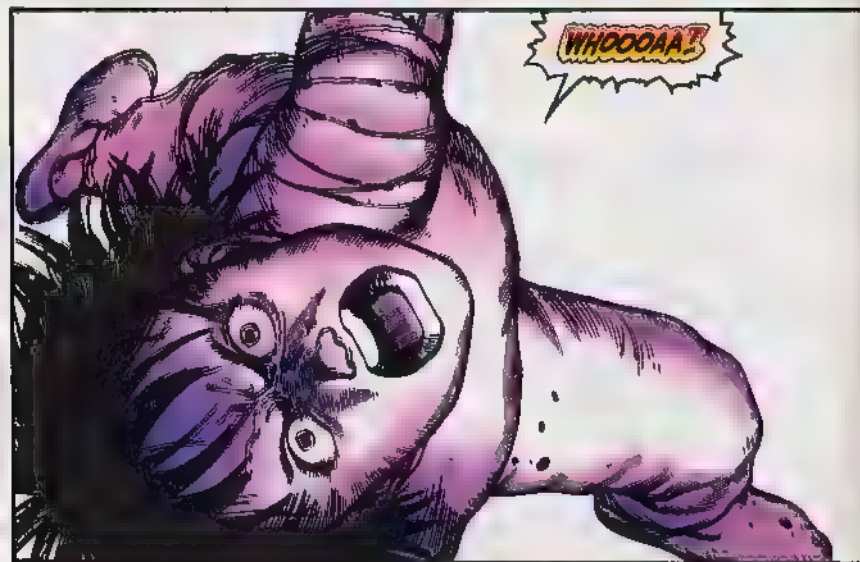
KTK













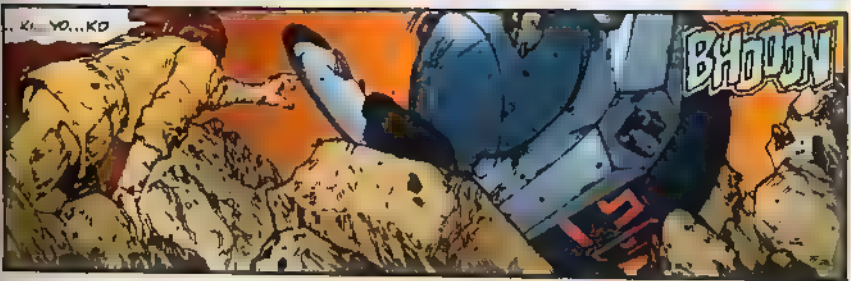
LADY MIYAKO!



ANSWER ME,
KIYOKO!



KIYOKO!



BHOON!

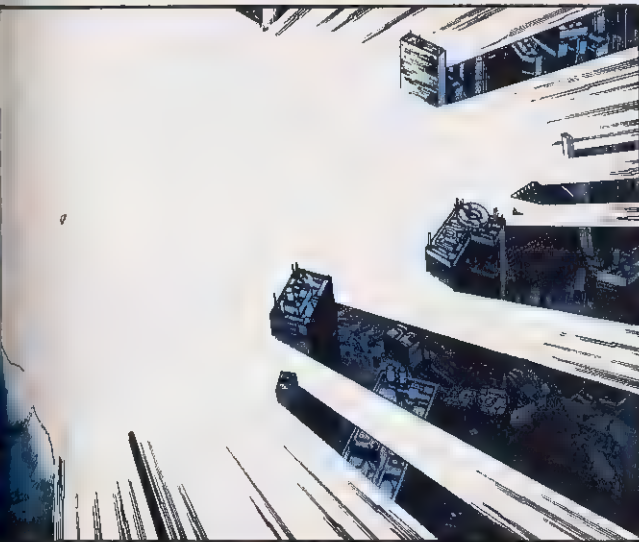
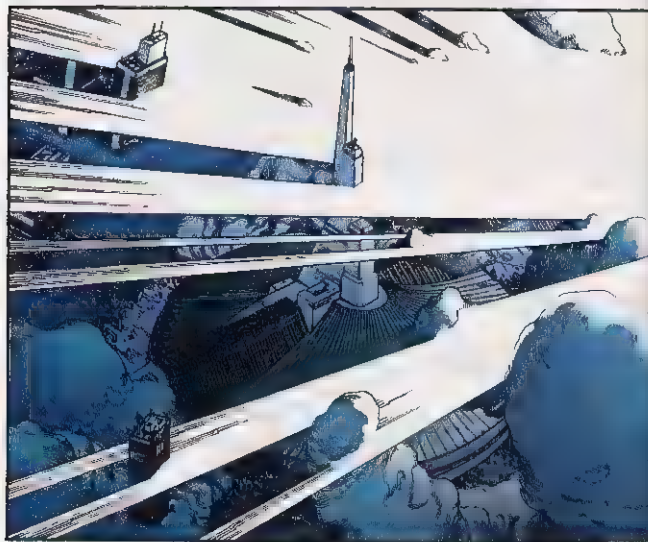


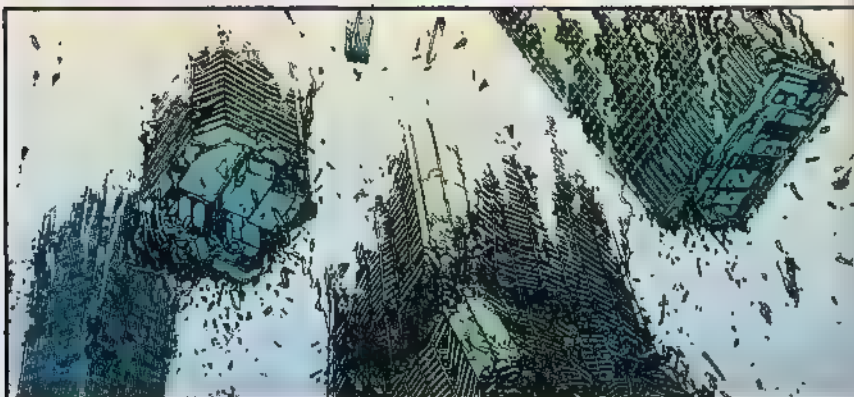
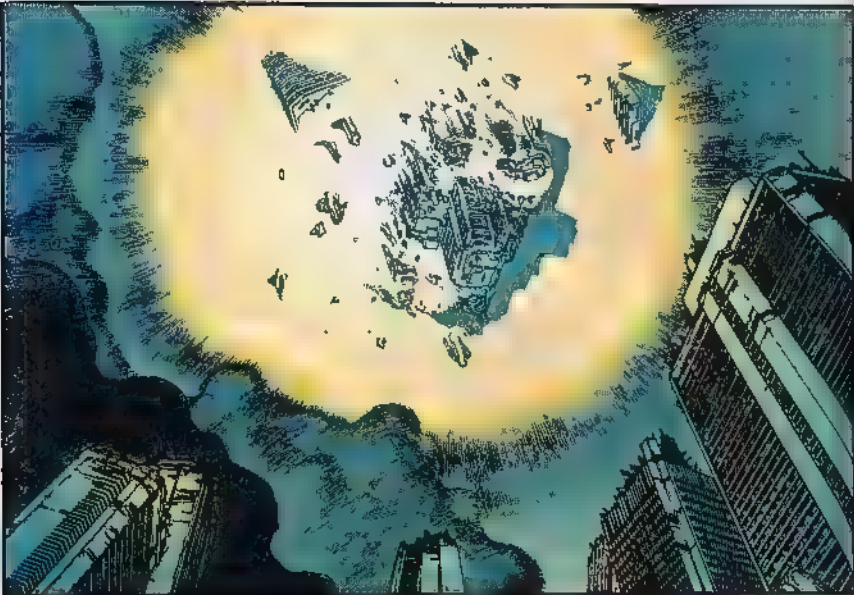
LOOK!

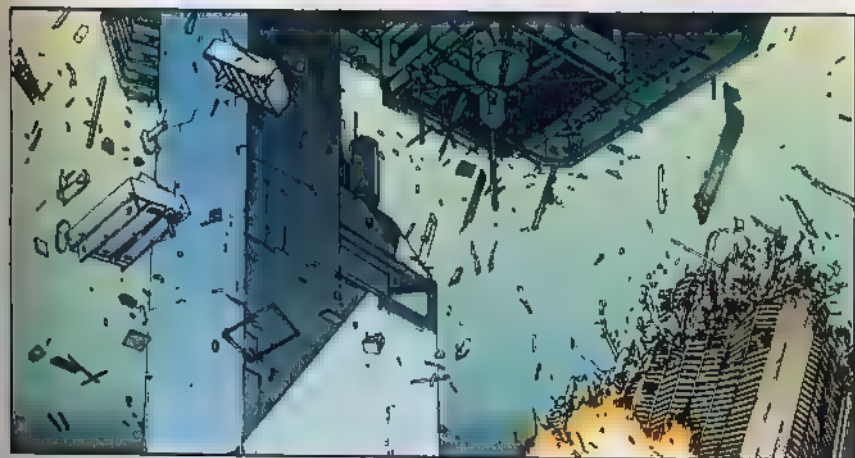
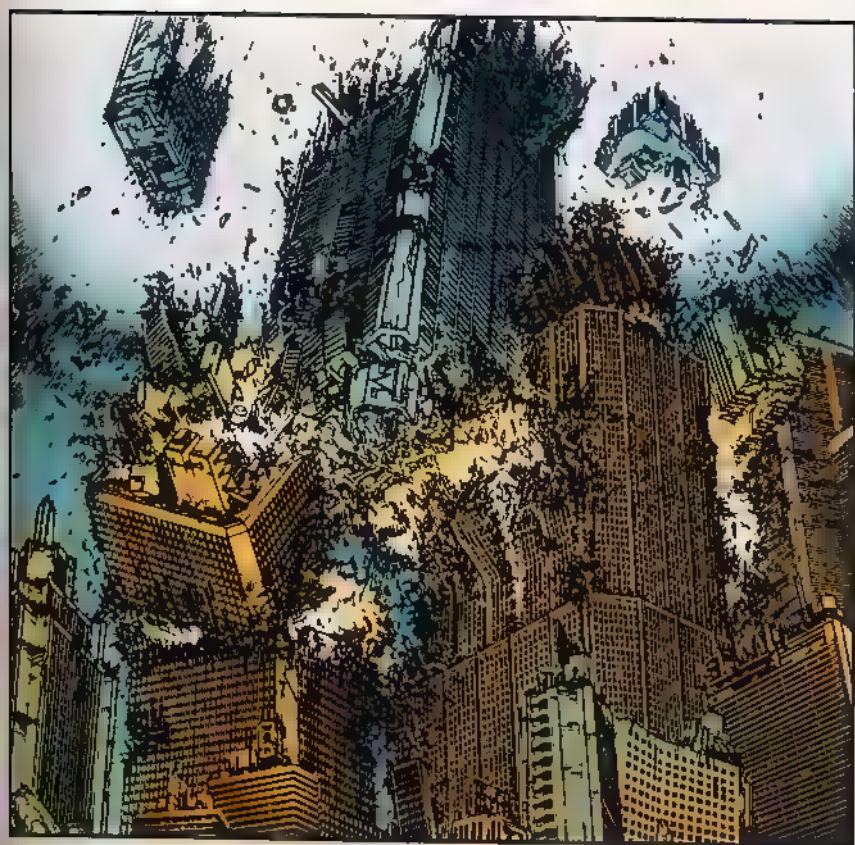
WHAT
IS
THAT
?!

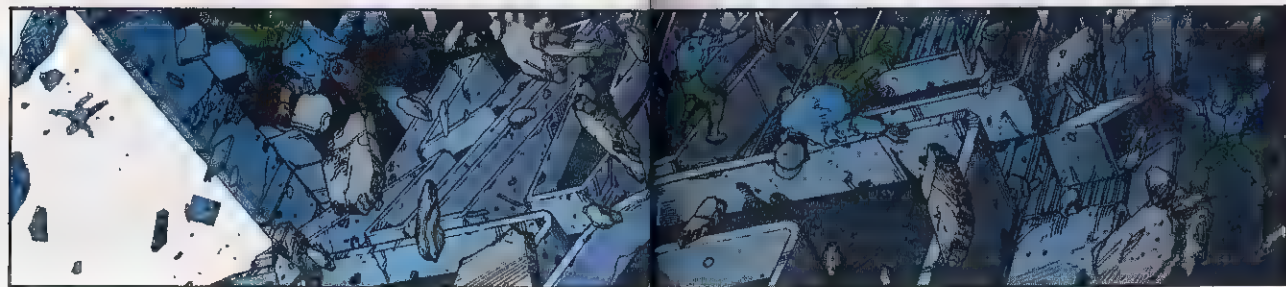
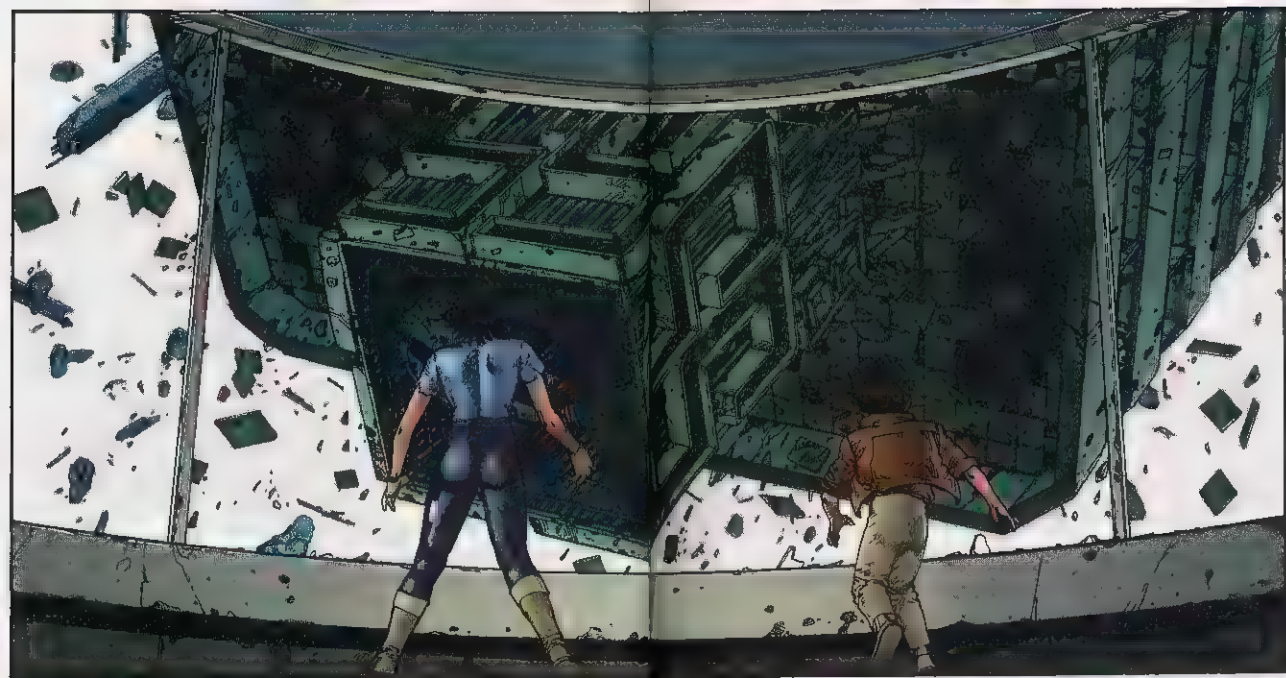
IS THAT
WHAT I THINK
IT IS?

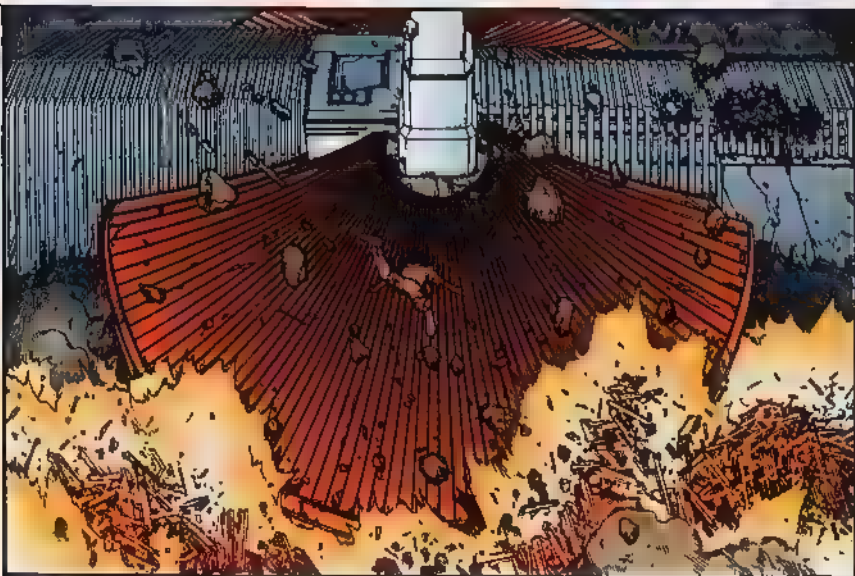
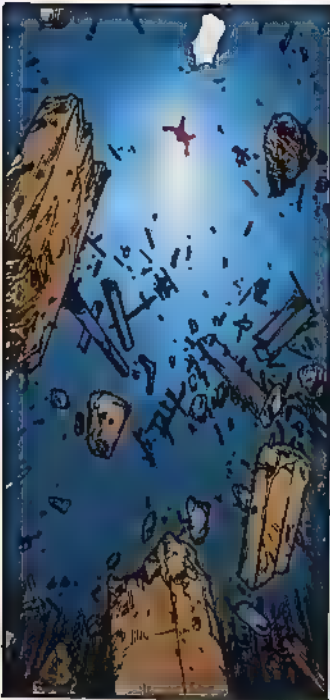
NO, THIS LOOKS
DIFFERENT



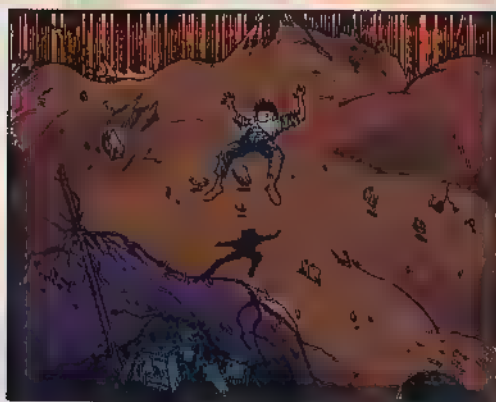
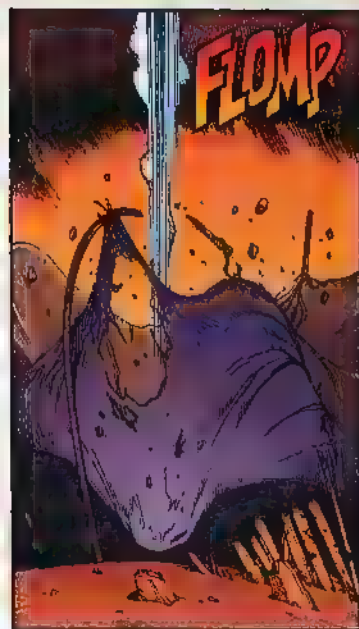


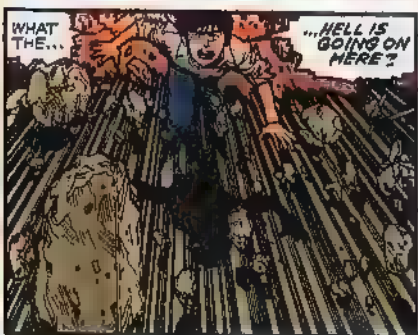
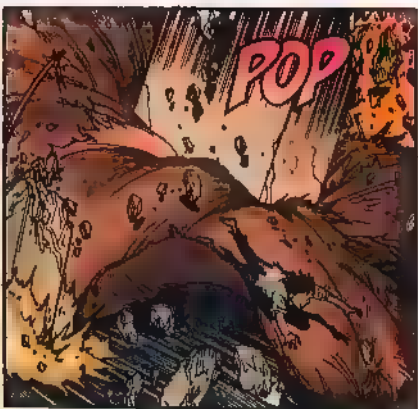
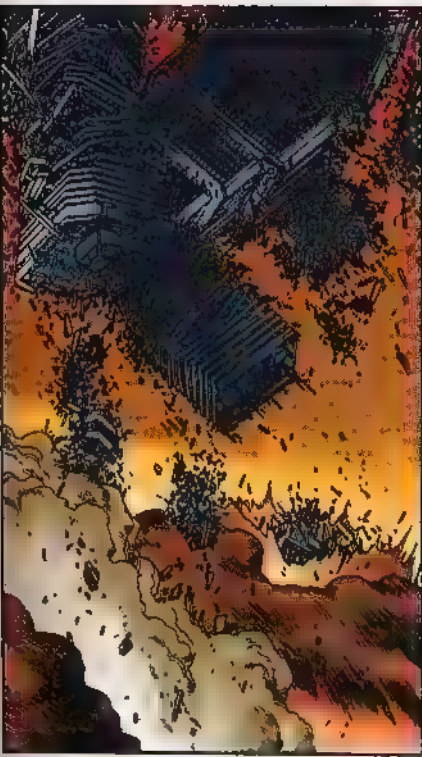


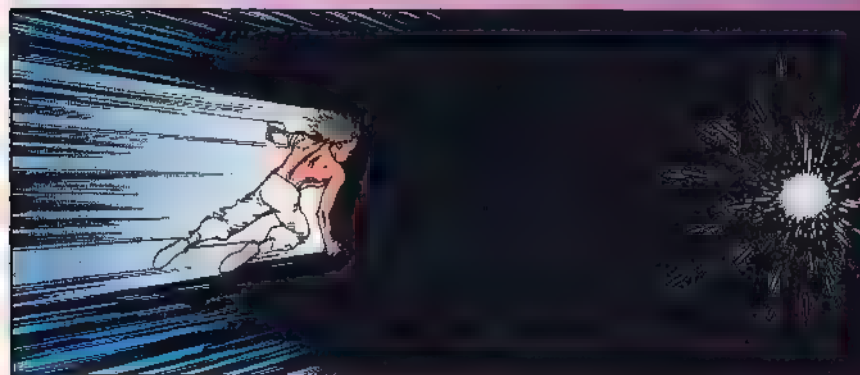
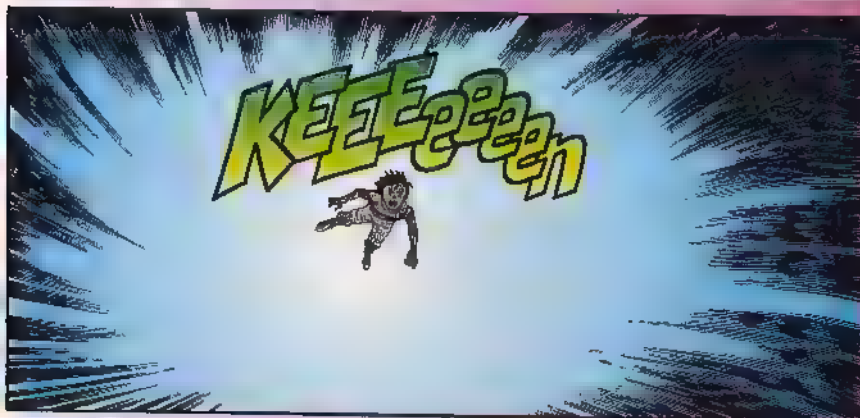
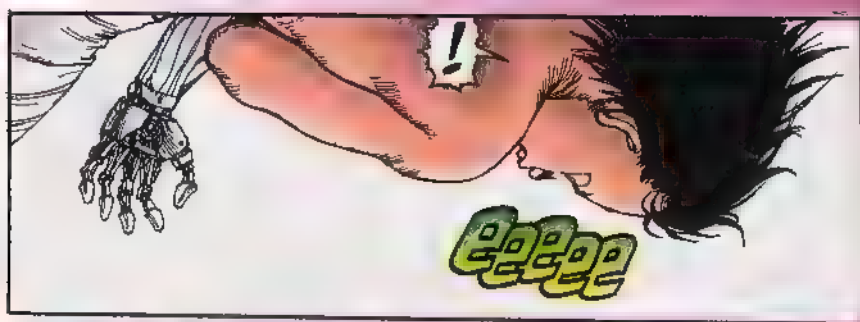


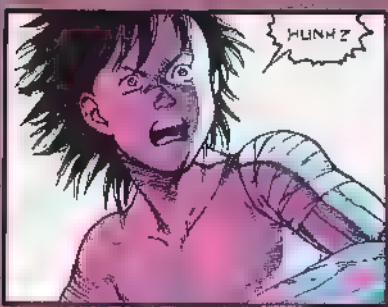
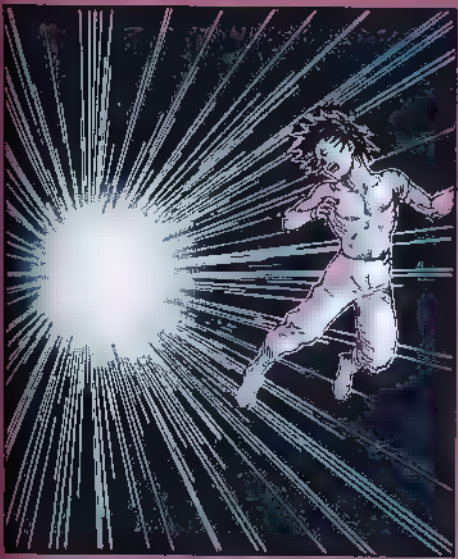
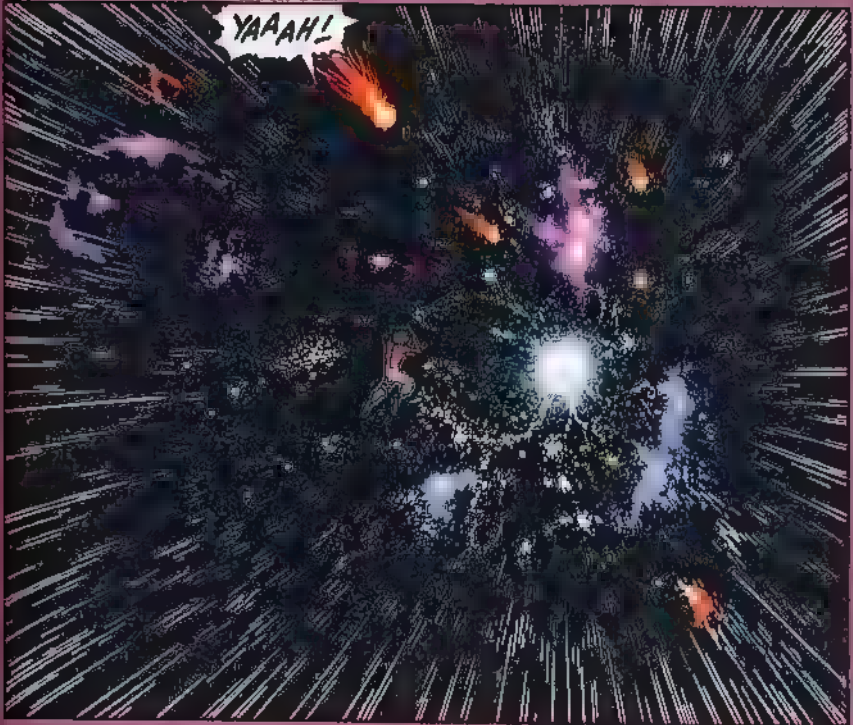


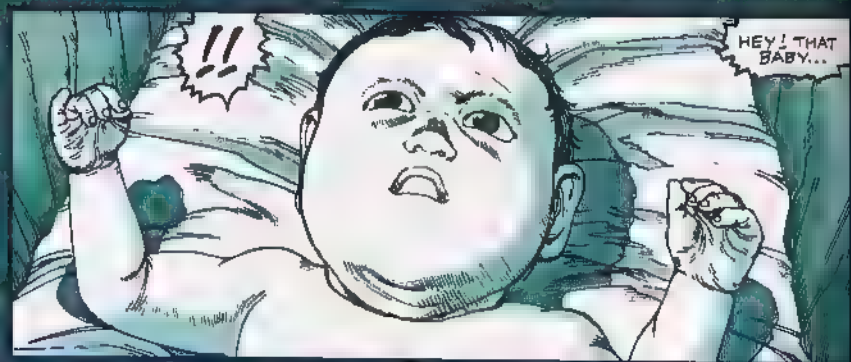
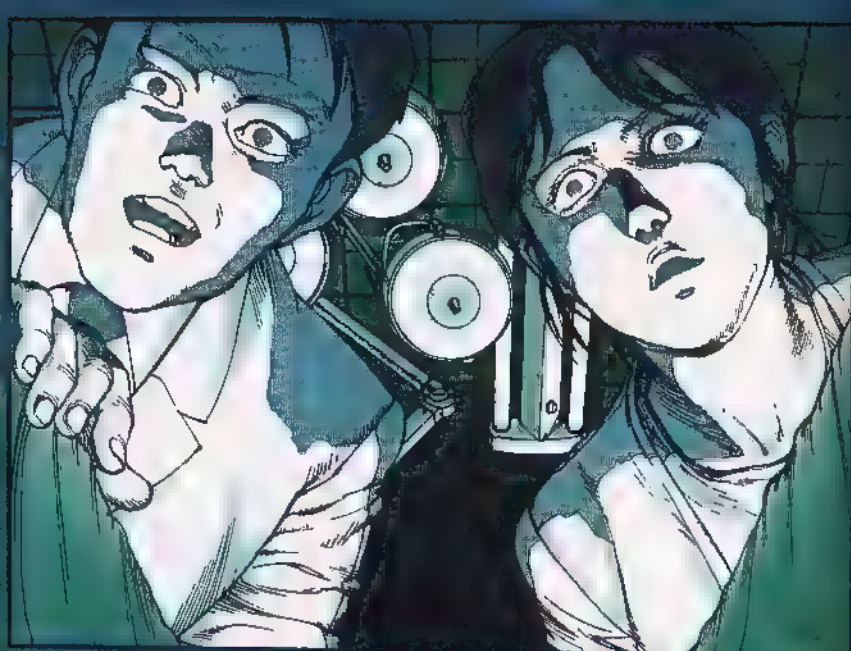


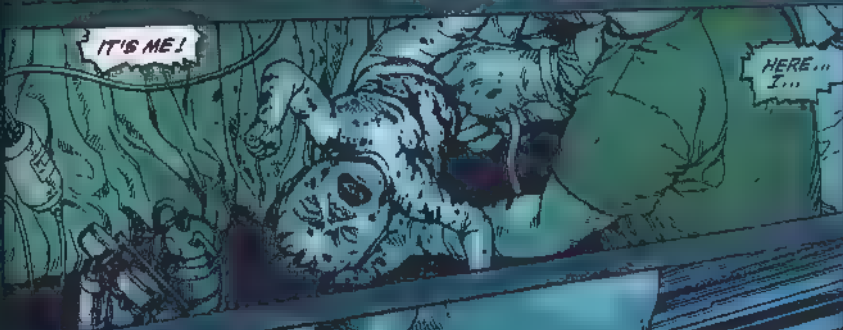
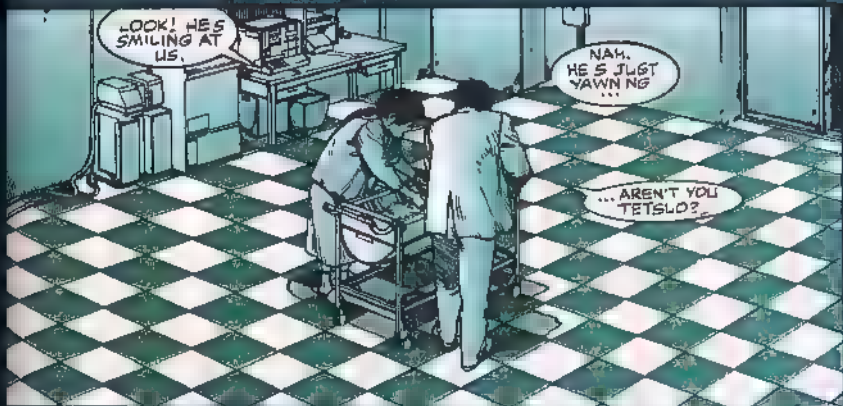


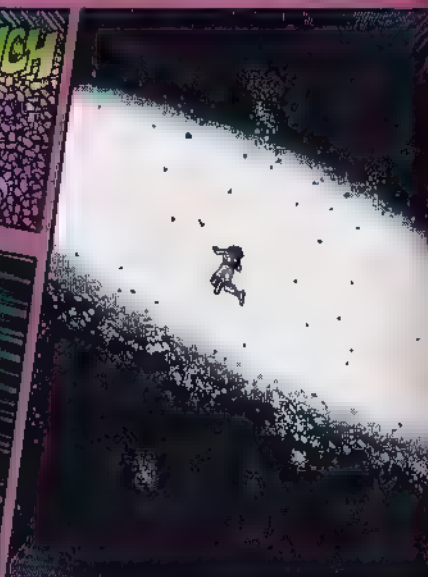


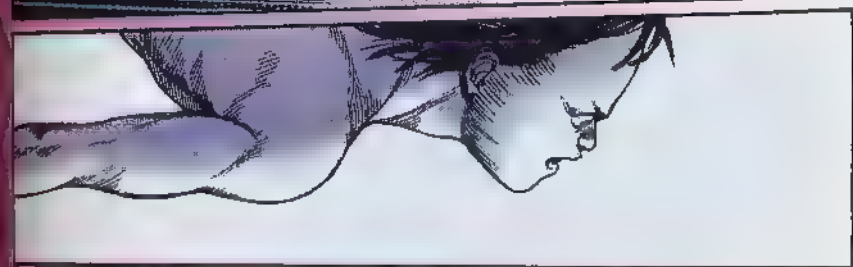
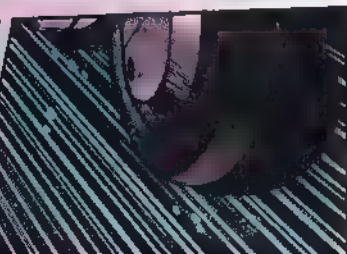


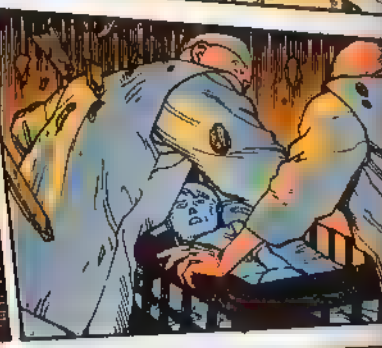
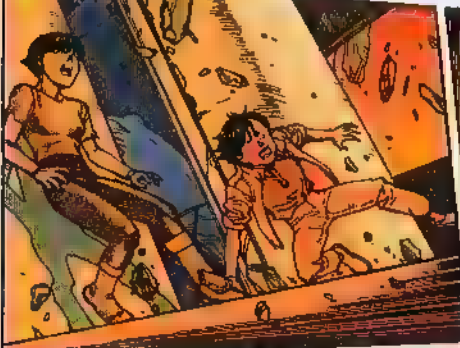
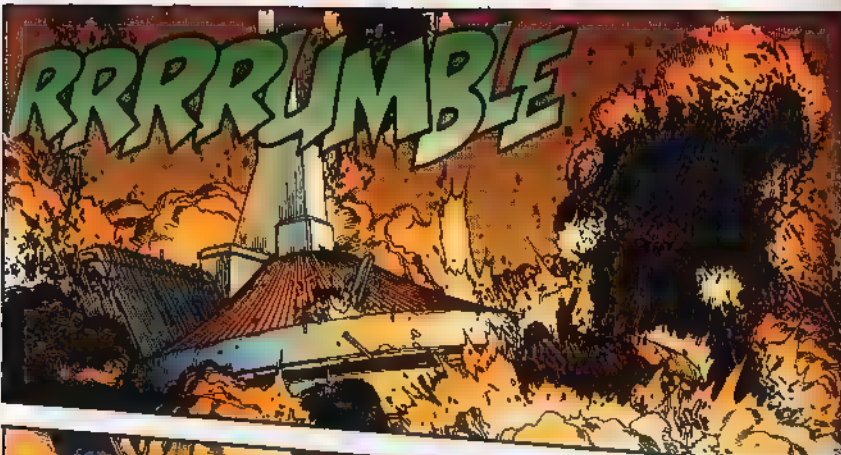


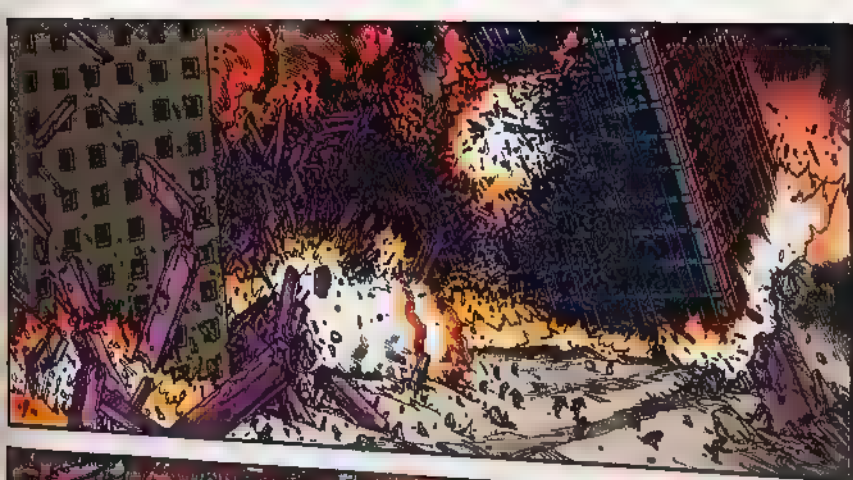








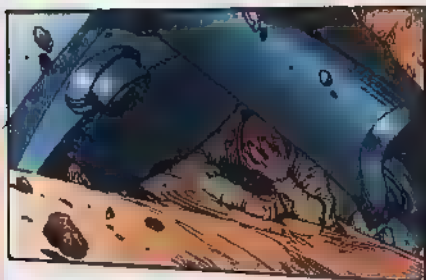
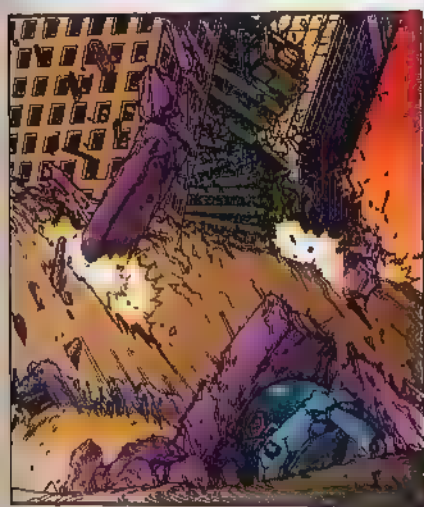


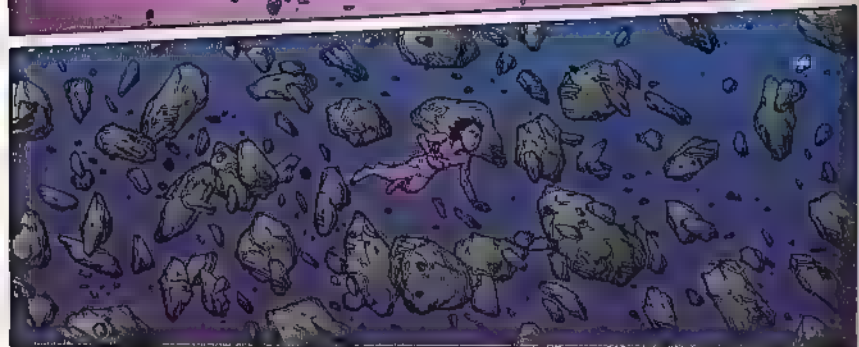
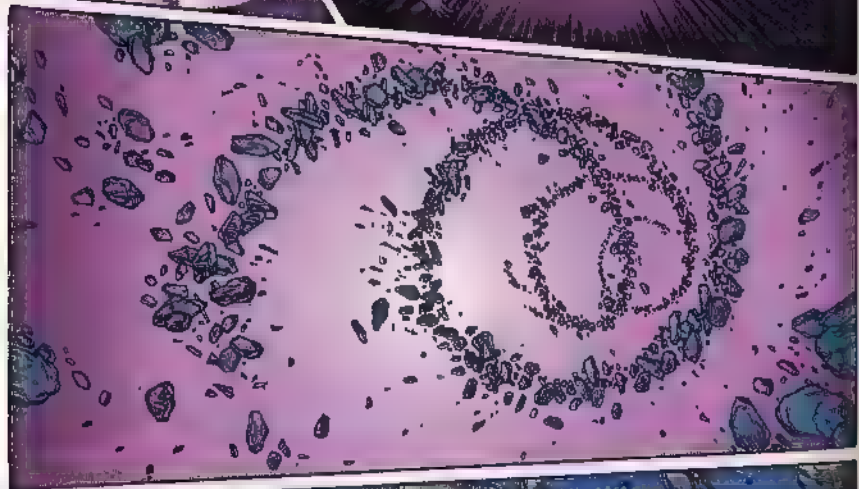


WHUH-OH!



AAIEEE!



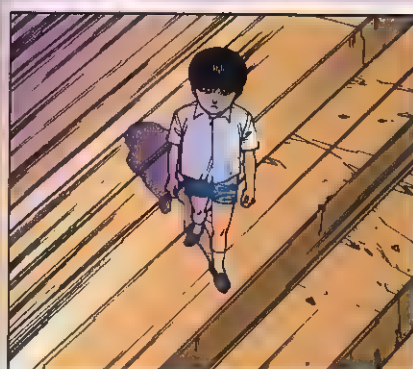
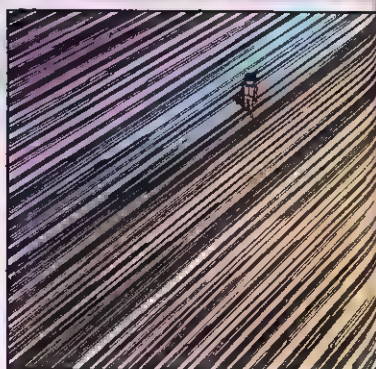
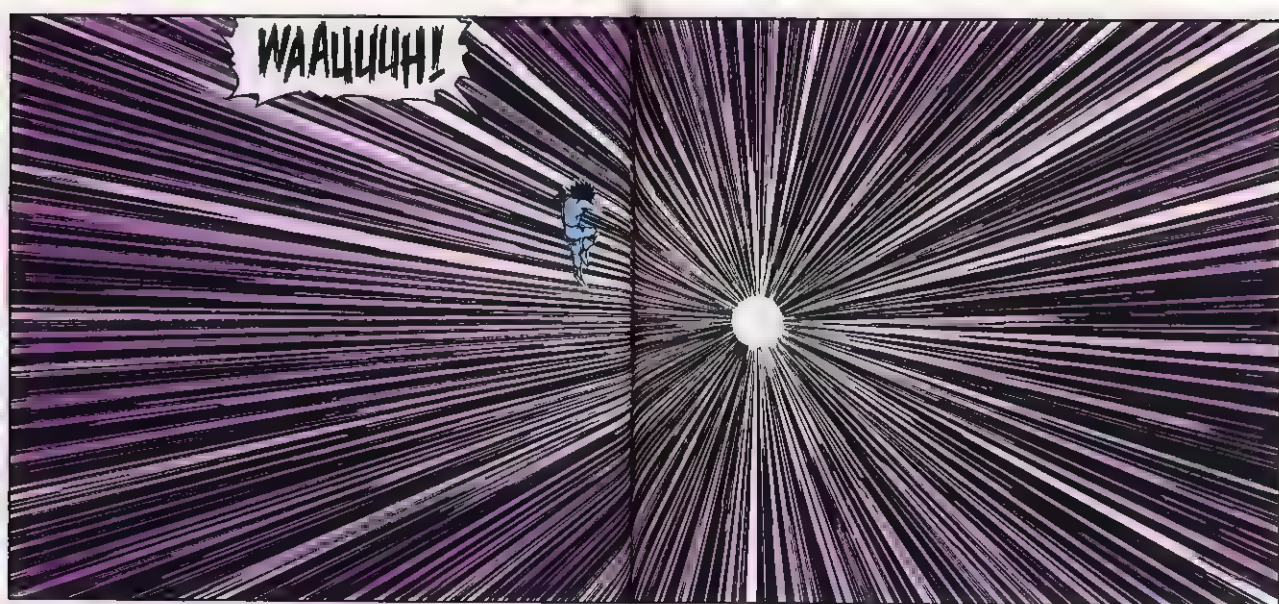


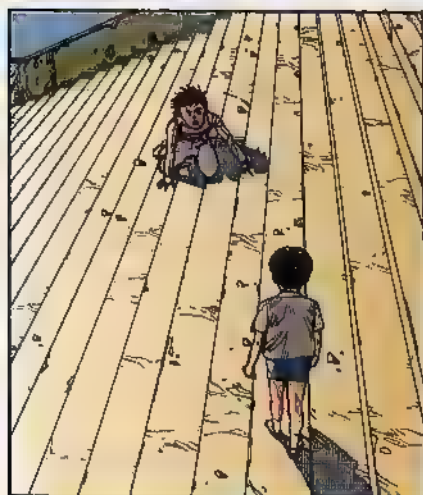
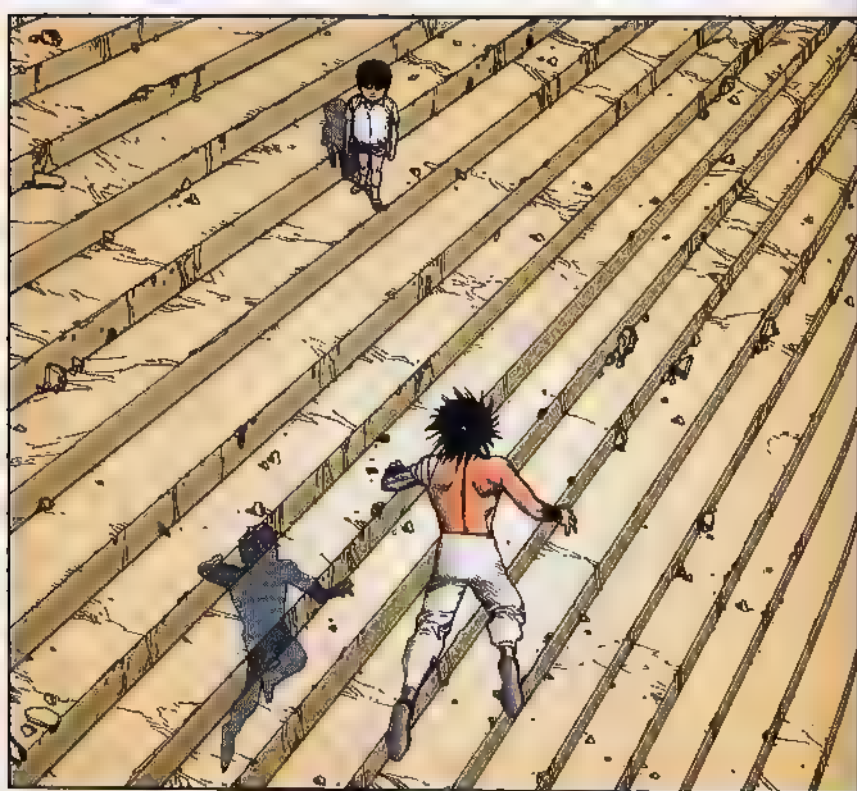
IT'S
SOME
KIND
OF
SHAPE
...

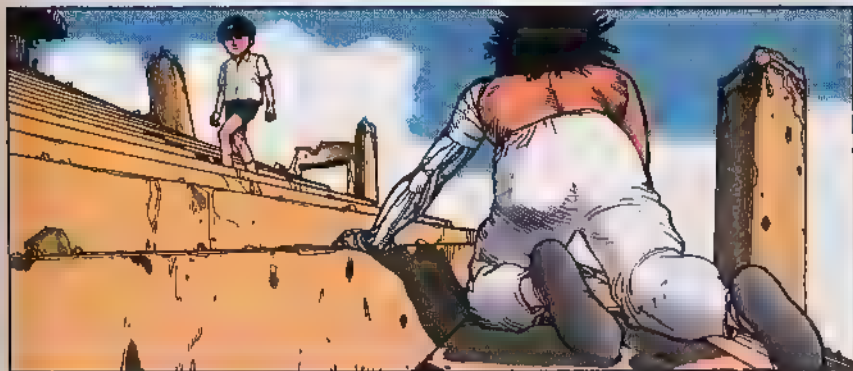
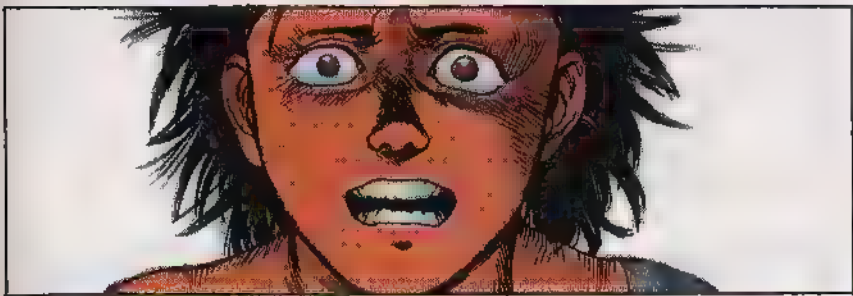
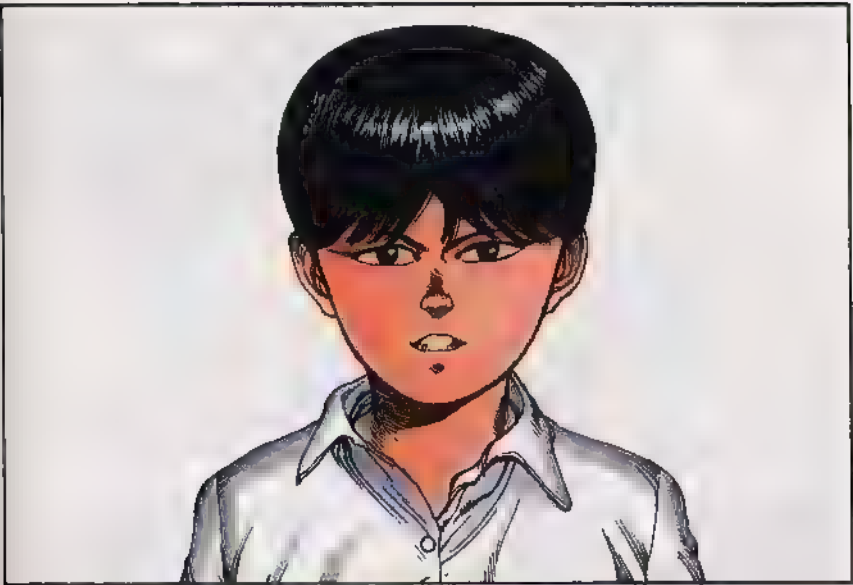
SAME
AS THE
ONE AKIRA'S
ALWAYS PLAYING
WITH!

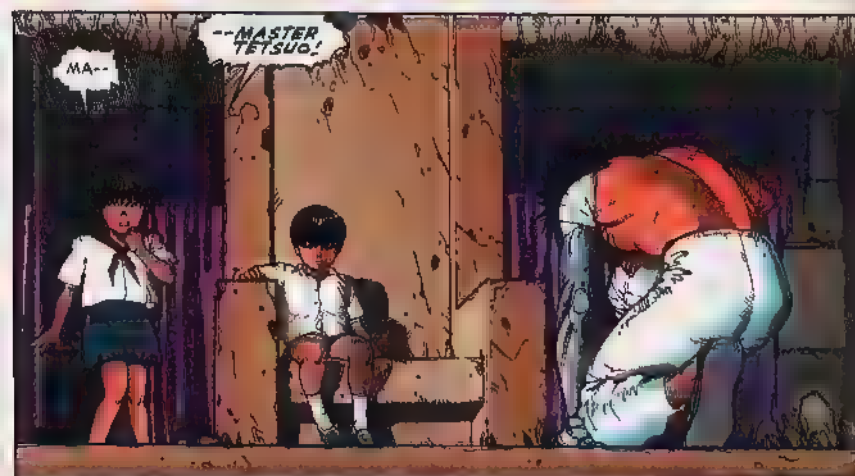
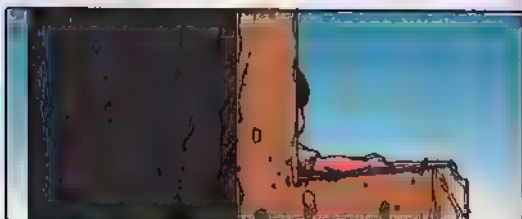
?!
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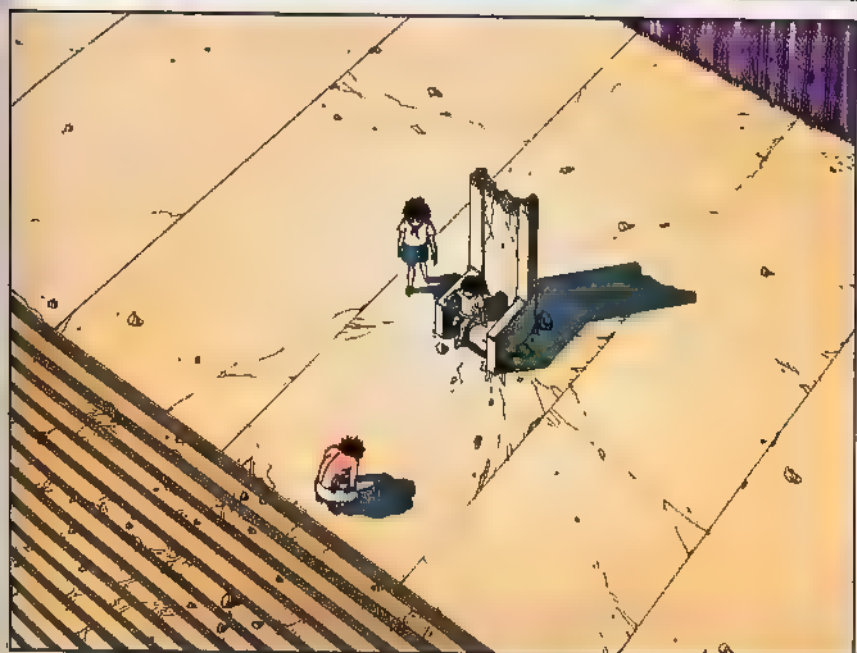


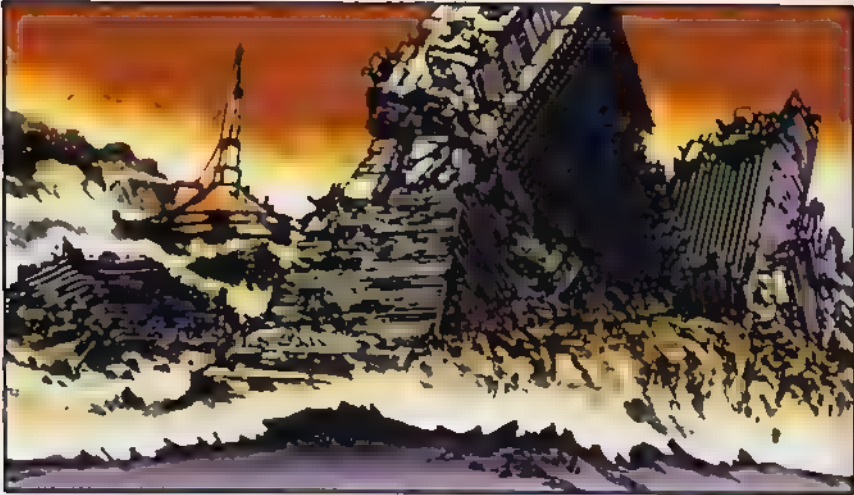












NEXT ISSUE. **A WESTERN WIND**

Last month, Epic printed readers' comments on **KABA**, the collected illustrations of **Katsuhiro Otomo**. Lack of available space limited the number of comments printed, so we are continuing this month with **KABA: Readers Respond**.

"A great book! Not many good art books from Japan are available in Washington, DC, and it was truly good luck to find this one. Katsuhiro Otomo is very talented, I'm glad Kodansha has immortalized him in this wonderful book."

—Nick Heitzman
Washington, DC

"It's a wonderful package, really—the paper, printing, and colors all make KABA a book I'll treasure for years to come, not forgetting Katsuhiro Otomo's artwork, of course!"

—James A. Wu
Medford, MA

"A brilliant collection of a brilliant author and artist, of comics."

—Steven Henry
London, England

"Excellent book, I haven't been able to put it down since I've bought it."

—Stuart M. Johnson
Savannah, GA

"Excellent production, design, and layout of text and art."

—Patrick N. Cosgrove
San Antonio, TX

"Great sequence on pages 60–66!"

—Kaveh Kardan
Montreal, Canada

"Classic! More than an illustration book."

—Wong Tak Wai
Hong Kong

"This art is a pleasant synthesis of intricate detail and sensitive feel for and expression of expression and emotion."

—Christian Simon
Newark, CA

"Very impressive! I enjoyed the information about Mr. Otomo and his workshop."

—Henry Rieke
Morgantown, WV

"Excellent I've never seen artwork this good I would like to be an illustrator, and KABA is very inspirational I thank you for what you've done"

—Daran B. Chapman
Dearborn, MI

"KABA rules!"

—Neil Barrie Hodge
Ontario, Canada

"Please publish a second book! I'm dying to get it."

—Hiro Yakakura
Rancho Palos Verdes, CA

"I enjoyed the book and was pleased to find it in English. I enjoyed the detail on the book and the fine pictures and the drawing. In the future I hope many more books like this will come out so that people will understand that animation is not just for children."

—Tom Miller
Revere, MA

"I love Otomo's works. Please make more available. The artwork is radical and the story is always excellent."

—Mark Cota
Poughkeepsie, NY

"This is a wonderful piece of work. However, I would have liked to read more of Mr. Otomo's comments on his art. Thank you for this book."

—Le Dong
Paris, France

AKIRA: the movie AN UPDATE

Upcoming **AKIRA** dates include:

**BOSTON AREA
BROOKLINE, MA
COOLIDGE CORNER MOVIEHOUSE**
August 31–September 13

**KEENE, NH
PUTNAM SCREENING ROOM**
September 7–9

**WICHITA, KS
NORTH ROCK SIX**
September 13

**WATERVILLE, ME
RAILROAD SQUARE CINEMA**
September 14–20

**PLEASANT STREET THEATER
NORTHAMPTON, MA**
September 19–25

Also, look for **AKIRA** in New York City at the New Film Forum in early Fall.

KATSUHIRO OTOMO

writer • illustrator

YASUMITSU SUETAKE

chief assistant to Mr. Otomo

MAKOTO SHIOSAKI

SATOSHI TAKABATAKE

assistants to Mr. Otomo

HIROSHI HIRATA

designer • AKIRA adaptation

AKIRA SAITO

designer • Kodansha edition

Kodansha Ltd

YOKO UMEZAWA

translation

KOICHI YURI

HISATAKA NISHITANI

editor • Kodansha edition

YUKA ANDO

editorial coordinator • Tokyo

NORIYUKI OKAZAKI

managing editor • New York

Epic Comics

JO DUFFY

english adaptation

STEVE OLIFF

writer

OLYOPTICS COMPUTER CREW

co-artists

MICHAEL HIGGINS

letterer

MARIE JAVINS

assistant editor

MARGARET CLARK

editor

CARL POTTS

executive editor

Power. Its touch, its taste, its feel—that's the order of the day in Neo-Tokyo. It is from the desire for power that Tetsuo's aide once more advances his army into the temple of Lady Miyako, eager for the secrets within. It is in the use of power that the Colonel unleashes his secret weapon—with devastating results. And it is for the meaning of power that Tetsuo is catapulted into a search for an understanding of his psychic abilities, a journey that takes him from the infinity of the stars to the deep recesses of his own soul.

KATSUHIRO OTOMO'S

AKIRA



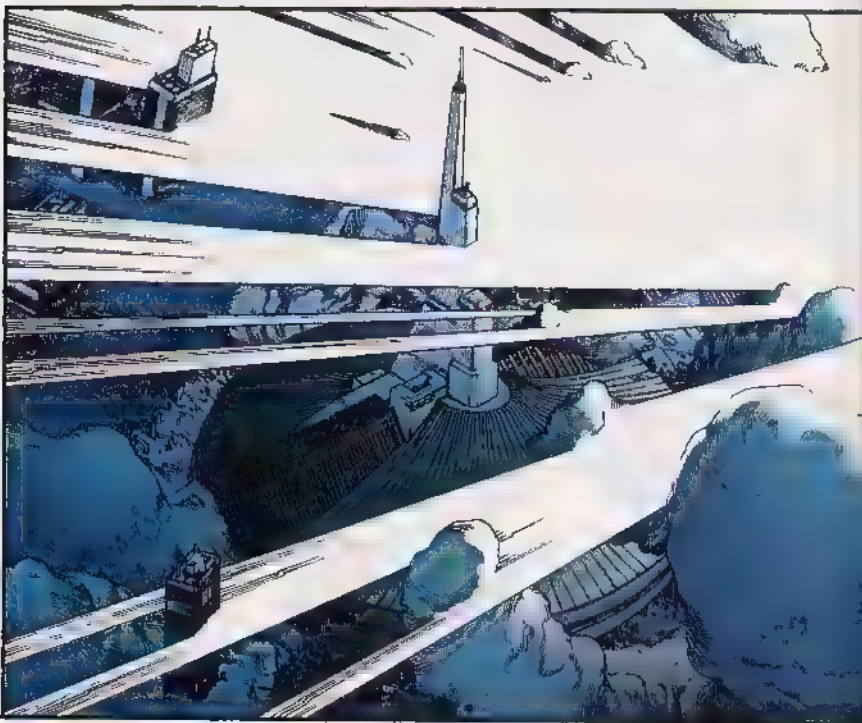
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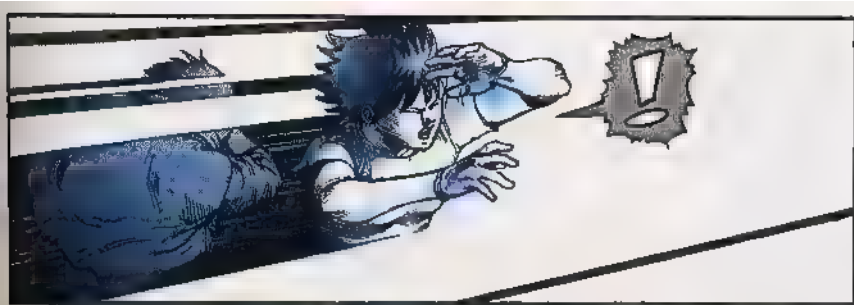
X-FUTURE

I love um

I buy um

I preserve um









WAACCHH!



?!



